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TALES

OF

A TRAVELLER,

AND

COMPANIONS OF COLUMBUS.

BY WASHINGTON IRVING.

LONDON:
GEORGE ROUTLEDGE & CO., SOHO SQUARE.
1850.

KING ALFRED'S COLLEGE
WINCHESTER

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TO THE READER.

WORTHY AND DEAR READER!—Hast thou ever been waylaid in the midst of a pleasant tour by some treacherous malady: thy heels tripped up, and thou left to count the tedious minutes as they passed, in the solitude of an inn chamber? If thou hast, thou wilt be able to pity me. Behold me, interrupted in the course of my journeying up the fair banks of the Rhine, and laid up by indisposition in this old frontier town of Mentz. I have worn out every source of amusement. I know the sound of every clock that strikes, and bell that rings, in the place. I know to a second when to listen for the first tap of the Prussian drum, as it summons the garrison to parade, or at what hour to expect the distant sound of the Austrian military band. All these have grown wearisome to me; and even the well-known step of my doctor, as he slowly paces the corridor, with healing in the creak of his shoes, no longer affords an agreeable interruption to the monotony of my apartment.

For a time I attempted to beguile the weary hours, by studying German under the tuition of mine host's pretty little daughter, Katrine; but I soon found even German had not power to charm a languid ear, and that the conjugating of *ich liebe* might be powerless, however rosy the lips which uttered it.

I tried to read, but my mind would not fix itself. I turned over volume after volume, but threw them by with distaste;

"Well, then," said I, at length, in despair, "if I cannot read a book, I will write one." Never was there a more lucky idea; it at once gave me occupation and amusement. The writing of a book was considered in old times as an enterprise of toil and difficulty, insomuch that the most trifling lucubration was denominated a "work," and the world talked with awe and reverence of "the labours of the learned." These matters are better understood now-a-days.

Thanks to the improvements in all kind of manufactures, the art of book-making has been made familiar to the meanest capacity. Everybody is an author. The scribbling of a quarto is the mere pastime of the idle; the young gentleman throws off his brace of duodecimos in the intervals of the sporting season, and the young lady produces her set of volumes with the same facility that her great-grandmother worked a set of chair-bottoms.

The idea having struck me, therefore, to write a book, the reader will easily perceive that the execution of it was no difficult matter. I rummaged my portfolio, and cast about, in my recollection, for those floating materials which a man naturally collects in travelling; and here I have arranged them in this little work.

As I know this to be a story-telling and a story-reading age, and that the world is fond of being taught by apologue, I have digested the instruction I would convey into a number of tales. They may not possess the power of amusement which the tales told by many of my contemporaries possess; but then I value myself on the sound moral which each of them contains. This may not be apparent at first, but the reader will be sure to find it out in the end. I am for curing the world by gentle alteratives, not by violent doses; indeed, the patient should never be conscious that he is taking a dose. I have learnt this much from my experience under the hands of the worthy Hippocrates of Mentz.

I am not, therefore, for those barefaced tales which carry their moral on the surface, staring one in the face; they are enough to

deter the squeamish reader. On the contrary, I have often hid my moral from sight, and disguised it as much as possible by sweets and spices, so that while the simple reader is listening with open mouth to a ghost or a love story, he may have a bolus of sound morality popped down his throat, and be never the wiser for the fraud.

As the public is apt to be curious about the sources whence an author draws his stories, doubtless that it may know how far to put faith in them, I would observe, that the adventure of the German Student, or rather the latter part of it, is founded on an anecdote related to me as existing somewhere in French; and, indeed, I have been told, since writing it, that an ingenious tale has been founded on it by an English writer; but I have never met with either the former or the latter in print. Some of the circumstances in the Adventure of the Mysterious Picture, and in the Story of the Young Italian, are vague recollections of anecdotes related to me some years since; but from what source derived, I do not know. The Adventure of the Young Painter among the banditti is taken almost entirely from an authentic narrative in manuscript.

As to the other tales contained in this work, and indeed to my tales generally, I can make but one observation; I am an old traveller; I have read somewhat, heard and seen more, and dreamt more than all. My brain is filled, therefore, with all kinds of odds and ends. In travelling, these heterogeneous matters have become shaken up in my mind, as the articles are apt to be in an ill-packed travelling trunk; so that when I attempt to draw forth a fact, I cannot determine whether I have read, heard, or dreamt it; and I am always at a loss to know how much to believe of my own stories.

These matters being premised, fall to, worthy reader, with good appetite; and, above all, with good-humour, to what is here set before thee. If the tales I have furnished should prove to be bad, they will at least be found short; so that no one will be wearied long on the same theme. "Variety is charming," as some poet observes.

There is a certain relief in change, even though it be from bad to worse! As I have often found in travelling in a stage-coach, that it is often a comfort to shift one's position, and be bruised in a new place.

Ever thine,

GEOFFREY CRAYON.

Dated from the HOTEL DE DARMSTADT.
ci-devant HOTEL DE PARIS,
MENTZ, *otherwise called* MAYENCE.

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PART I.

STRANGE STORIES

BY A NERVOUS GENTLEMAN.

I'll tell you more, there was a fish taken,
A monstrous fish, with a sword by 's side, a long sword,
A pike in 's neck, and a gun in 's nose, a huge gun,
And letters of mart in 's mouth from the Duke of Florence,
Cleanthes.—This is a monstrous lie.
Tony.— I do confess it.
Do you think I 'd tell you truths?

FLETCHER'S *Wife for a Month.*

THE GREAT UNKNOWN.

THE following adventures were related to me by the same nervous gentleman who told me the romantic tale of the Stout Gentleman, published in Bracebridge Hall. It is very singular, that although I expressly stated that story to have been told to me, and described the very person who told it, still it has been received as an adventure that happened to myself. Now I protest I never met with any adventure of the kind. I should not have grieved at this, had it not been intimated by the author of Waverley, in an introduction to his novel of Peveril of the Peak, that he was himself the stout gentleman alluded to. I have ever since been importuned by questions and letters from gentlemen, and particularly from ladies without number, touching what I had seen of the Great Unknown.

Now all this is extremely tantalizing. It is like being congratulated on the high prize when one has drawn a blank; for I have just as great a desire as any one of the public to penetrate the mystery of that very singular personage, whose voice fills every corner of the world, without any one being able to tell whence it comes.

My friend, the nervous gentleman, also, who is a man of very shy, retired habits, complains that he has been excessively annoyed in consequence of its getting about in his neighbourhood that he is the fortunate personage. Insomuch, that he has become a character of considerable notoriety in two or three country towns,

and has been repeatedly teased to exhibit himself at blue-stocking parties, for no other reason than that of being "the gentleman who has had a glimpse of the author of Waverley."

Indeed the poor man has grown ten times as nervous as ever, since he has discovered on such good authority, who the stout gentleman was; and will never forgive himself for not having made a more resolute effort to get a full sight of him. He has anxiously endeavoured to call up a recollection of what he saw of that portly personage; and has ever since kept a curious eye on all gentlemen of more than ordinary dimensions, whom he has seen getting into stage-coaches. All in vain! The features he had caught a glimpse of seem common to the whole race of stout gentlemen, and the Great Unknown remains as great an unknown as ever.

Having premised these circumstances, I will now let the nervous gentleman proceed with his stories.

THE HUNTING DINNER.

I was once at a hunting dinner, given by a worthy fox-hunting old Baronet, who kept bachelor's hall in jovial style, in an ancient rook-haunted family mansion, in one of the middle counties. He had been a devoted admirer of the fair sex in his younger days; but, having travelled much, studied the sex in various countries with distinguished success, and returned home profoundly instructed, as he supposed, in the ways of woman, and a perfect master of the art of pleasing, had the mortification of being jilted by a little boarding-school girl, who was scarcely versed in the accidence of love.

The baronet was completely overcome by such an incredible defeat; retired from the world in disgust; put himself under the government of his housekeeper; and took to fox-hunting like a perfect Nimrod. Whatever poets may say to the contrary, a man will grow out of love as he grows old; and a pack of fox-hounds may chase out of his heart even the memory of a boarding-school goddess. The baronet was, when I saw him, as merry and mellow an old bachelor as ever followed a hound; and the love he had once felt for one woman had spread itself over the whole sex; so that there was not a pretty face in the whole country round but came in for a share.

The dinner was prolonged till a late hour; for our host having no ladies in his household to summon us to the drawing-room, the bottle maintained its true bachelor sway, unrivalled by its potent enemy the tea-kettle. The old hall in which we dined echoed to bursts of robustious fox-hunting merriment, that made the ancient antlers shake on the walls. By degrees, however, the wine and the wassail of mine host began to operate upon bodies already a

little jaded by the chase. The choice spirits which flashed up at the beginning of the dinner, sparkled for a time, then gradually went out one after another, or only emitted now and then a faint gleam from the socket. Some of the briskest talkers, who had given tongue so bravely at the first burst, fell fast asleep; and none kept on their way but certain of those long-winded prosers, who, like short-legged hounds, worry on unnoticed at the bottom of conversation, but are sure to be in at the death. Even these at length subsided into silence; and scarcely any thing was heard but the nasal communications of two or three veteran masticators, who having been silent while awake, were indemnifying the company in their sleep.

At length the announcement of tea and coffee in the cedar-parlour roused all hands from this temporary torpor. Every one awoke marvellously renovated, and while sipping the refreshing beverage out of the baronet's old-fashioned hereditary china, began to think of departing for their several homes. But here a sudden difficulty arose. While we had been prolonging our repast, a heavy winter storm had set in, with snow, rain, and sleet, driven by such bitter blasts of wind, that they threatened to penetrate to the very bone.

"It's all in vain," said our hospitable host, "to think of putting one's head out of doors in such weather. So, gentlemen, I hold you my guests for this night at least, and will have your quarters prepared accordingly."

The unruly weather, which became more and more tempestuous, rendered the hospitable suggestion unanswerable. The only question was, whether such an unexpected accession of company to an already crowded house would not put the housekeeper to her trumps to accommodate them.

"Pshaw," cried mine host, "did you ever know a bachelor's hall that was not elastic, and able to accommodate twice as many as it could hold?" So, out of a good-humoured pique, the housekeeper was summoned to a consultation before us all. The old lady appeared in her gala suit of faded brocade, which rustled with flurry and agitation; for, in spite of our host's bravado, she was a little perplexed. But in a bachelor's house, and with bachelor guests, these matters are readily managed. There is no lady of the house to stand upon squeamish points about lodging gentlemen in odd holes and corners, and exposing the shabby parts of the establishment. A bachelor's housekeeper is used to shifts and emergencies; so, after much worrying to and fro, and divers consultations about the red-room, and the blue-room, and the chintz-room, and the damask-room, and the little room with the bow window, the matter was finally arranged.

When all this was done, we were once more summoned to the standing rural amusement of eating. The time that had been consumed in dozing after dinner, and in the refreshment and consultation of the cedar-parlour, was sufficient, in the opinion of the

rosy-faced butler, to engender a reasonable appetite for supper. A slight repast had, therefore, been tricked up from the residue of dinner, consisting of a cold sirloin of beef, hashed venison, a devilled leg of a turkey or so, and a few other of those light articles taken by country gentlemen to ensure sound sleep and heavy snoring.

The nap after dinner had brightened up every one's wit; and a great deal of excellent humour was expended upon the perplexities of mine host and his housekeeper, by certain married gentlemen of the company, who considered themselves privileged in joking with a bachelor's establishment. From this the banter turned as to what quarters each would find, on being thus suddenly billeted in so antiquated a mansion.

"By my soul," said an Irish captain of dragoons, one of the most merry and boisterous of the party, "by my soul but I should not be surprised if some of those good-looking gentlefolks that hang along the walls should walk about the rooms of this stormy night; or if I should find the ghost of one of those long-waisted ladies turning into my bed in mistake for her grave in the churchyard."

"Do you believe in ghosts, then?" said a thin hatchet-faced gentleman, with projecting eyes like a lobster.

I had remarked this last personage during dinner-time for one of those incessant questioners, who have a craving, unhealthy appetite in conversation. He never seemed satisfied with the whole of a story; never laughed when others laughed; but always put the joke to the question. He never could enjoy the kernel of the nut, but pestered himself to get more out of the shell. "Do you believe in ghosts, then?" said the inquisitive gentleman.

"Faith, but I do," replied the jovial Irishman. "I was brought up in the fear and belief of them. We had a Benshee in our own family, honey."

"A Benshee, and what's that?" cried the questioner.

"Why, an old lady ghost that tends upon your real Milesian families, and waits at their window to let them know when some of them are to die."

"A mighty pleasant piece of information!" cried an elderly gentleman with a knowing look, and with a flexible nose, to which he could give a whimsical twist when he wished to be waggish.

"By my soul, but I'd have you to know it's a piece of distinction to be waited on by a Benshee. It's a proof that one has pure blood in one's veins. But i'faith, now we are talking of ghosts, there never was a house or a night better fitted than the present for a ghost adventure. Pray, Sir John, haven't you such a thing as a haunted chamber to put a guest in?"

"Perhaps," said the Baronet, smiling, "I might accommodate you even on that point."

"Oh, I should like it of all things, my jewel. Some dark oaken room, with ugly, wobegone portraits, that stare dismally

at one; and about which the housekeeper has a power of delightful stories of love and murder. And then a dim lamp, a table with a rusty sword across it, and a spectre all in white, to draw aside one's curtains at midnight —"

"In truth," said an old gentleman at one end of the table, "you put me in mind of an anecdote—"

"Oh, a ghost story! a ghost story!" was vociferated round the board, every one edging his chair a little nearer.

The attention of the whole company was now turned upon the speaker. He was an old gentleman, one side of whose face was no match for the other. The eyelid drooped and hung down like an unhinged window-shutter. Indeed, the whole side of his head was dilapidated, and seemed like the wing of a house shut up and haunted. I'll warrant that side was well stuffed with ghost stories.

There was a universal demand for the tale.

"Nay," said the old gentleman, "it's a mere anecdote, and a very common-place one; but such as it is you shall have it. It is a story that I once heard my uncle tell as having happened to himself. He was a man very apt to meet with strange adventures. I have heard him tell of others much more singular."

"What kind of a man was your uncle?" said the questioning gentleman.

"Why, he was rather a dry, shrewd kind of body; a great traveller, and fond of telling his adventures."

"Pray, how old might he have been when that happened."

"When what happened?" cried the gentleman with the flexible nose, impatiently. "Egad, you have not given any thing a chance to happen. Come, never mind our uncle's age; let us have his adventures."

The inquisitive gentleman being for the moment silenced, the old gentleman with the haunted head proceeded.

THE ADVENTURE OF MY UNCLE.

Many years since, some time before the French Revolution, my uncle passed several months at Paris. The English and French were on better terms in those days than at present, and mingled cordially in society. The English went abroad to spend money then, and the French were always ready to help them: they go abroad to save money at present, and that they can do without French assistance. Perhaps the travelling English were fewer and choicer than at present, when the whole nation has broke loose and inundated the continent. At any rate they circulated more readily and currently in foreign society, and my uncle, during his residence in Paris, made many very intimate acquaintances among the French noblesse.

Some time afterwards, he was making a journey in the winter time in that part of Normandy called the Pays de Caux, when,

as evening was closing in, he perceived the turrets of an ancient chateau rising out of the trees of its walled park; each turret with its high conical roof of gray slate, like a candle with an extinguisher on it.

"To whom does that chateau belong, friend?" cried my uncle to a meagre but fiery postilion, who, with tremendous jack-boots and cocked hat, was floundering on before him.

"To Monseigneur the Marquis de ——," said the postilion, touching his hat, partly out of respect to my uncle, and partly out of reverence to the noble name pronounced.

My uncle recollected the Marquis for a particular friend in Paris, who had often expressed a wish to see him at his paternal chateau. My uncle was an old traveller, one who knew well how to turn things to account. He revolved for a few moments in his mind how agreeable it would be to his friend the Marquis to be surprised in this sociable way by a pop visit; and how much more agreeable to himself to get into snug quarters in a chateau, and have a relish of the Marquis's well-known kitchen, and a smack of his superior Champagne and Burgundy, rather than put up with the miserable lodgment and miserable fare of a provincial inn. In a few minutes, therefore, the meagre postilion was cracking his whip like a very devil, or like a true Frenchman, up the long straight avenue that led to the chateau.

You have, no doubt, all seen French chateaus, as every body travels in France now-a-days. This was one of the oldest; standing naked and alone in the midst of a desert of gravel walks and cold stone terraces; with a cold-looking formal garden, cut into angles and rhomboids; and a cold leafless park, divided geometrically by straight alleys; and two or three cold-looking noseless statues; and fountains spouting cold water enough to make one's teeth chatter. At least such was the feeling they imparted on the wintry day of my uncle's visit; though, in hot summer weather, I'll warrant there was glare enough to scorch one's eyes out.

The smacking of the postilion's whip, which grew more and more intense the nearer they approached, frightened a flight of pigeons out of a dove-cot, and rooks out of the roofs, and finally a crew of servants out of the chateau, with the Marquis at their head. He was enchanted to see my uncle, for his chateau, like the house of our worthy host, had not many more guests at the time than it could accommodate. So he kissed my uncle on each cheek, after the French fashion, and ushered him into the castle.

The Marquis did the honours of the house with the urbanity of his country. In fact, he was proud of his old family chateau, for part of it was extremely old. There was a tower and chapel which had been built almost before the memory of man; but the rest was more modern, the castle having been nearly demolished during the wars of the League. The Marquis dwelt upon this event with great satisfaction, and seemed really to entertain a

grateful feeling towards Henry the Fourth for having thought his paternal mansion worth battering down. He had many stories to tell of the prowess of his ancestors; and several skull-caps, helmets, and cross-bows, and divers huge boots, and buff jerkins, to show, which had been worn by the leaguers. Above all, there was a two-handled sword, which he could hardly wield, but which he displayed as a proof that there had been giants in his family.

In truth, he was but a small descendant from such great warriors. When you looked at their bluff visages and brawny limbs, as depicted in their portraits, and then at the little Marquis, with his spindle shanks, and his sallow lantern visage, flanked with a pair of powdered ear-locks, or *ailes de pigeon*, that seemed ready to fly away with it, you could hardly believe him to be of the same race. But when you looked at the eyes that sparkled out like a beetle's from each side of his hooked nose, you saw at once that he inherited all the fiery spirit of his forefathers. In fact, a Frenchman's spirit never exhales, however his body may dwindle. It rather rarefies, and grows more inflammable, as the earthy particles diminish; and I have seen valour enough in a little fiery-hearted French dwarf to have furnished out a tolerable giant.

When once the Marquis, as was his wont, put on one of the old helmets stuck up in his hall, though his head no more filled it than a dry pea its peascod, yet his eyes flashed from the bottom of the iron cavern with the brilliancy of carbuncles; and when he poised the ponderous two-handled sword of his ancestors, you would have thought you saw the doughty little David wielding the sword of Goliath, which was unto him like a weaver's beam.

However, gentlemen, I am dwelling too long on this description of the Marquis and his chateau, but you must excuse me; he was an old friend of my uncle; and whenever my uncle told the story, he was always fond of talking a great deal about his host.—Poor little Marquis! He was one of that handful of gallant courtiers who made such a devoted but hopeless stand in the cause of their sovereign, in the chateau of the Tuileries, against the irruption of the mob on the sad tenth of August. He displayed the valour of a preux French chevalier to the last; flourishing feebly his little court sword with a *ça-ça!* in face of a whole legion of *sans culottes;* but was pinned to the wall like a butterfly, by the pike of a *poissarde*, and his heroic soul was borne up to heaven on his *ailes de pigeon*.

But all this has nothing to do with my story. To the point then. When the hour arrived for retiring for the night, my uncle was shown to his room in a venerable old tower. It was the oldest part of the chateau, and had in ancient times been the donjon or strong-hold; of course the chamber was none of the best. The Marquis had put him there, however, because he knew him to be a traveller of taste, and fond of antiquities; and also because the better apartments were already occupied. Indeed, he perfectly

reconciled my uncle to his quarters by mentioning the great personages who had once inhabited them, all of whom were, in some way or other, connected with the family. If you would take his word for it, John Baliol, or as he called him, Jean de Bailleul, had died of chagrin in this very chamber, on hearing of the success of his rival, Robert the Bruce, at the battle of Bannockburn. And when he added that the Duke de Guise had slept in it, my uncle was fain to felicitate himself on being honoured with such distinguished quarters.

The night was shrewd and windy, and the chamber none of the warmest. An old long-faced, long-bodied servant, in quaint livery, who attended upon my uncle, threw down an armful of wood beside the fireplace, gave a queer look about the room, and then wished him *bon repos* with a grimace and a shrug that would have been suspicious from any other than an old French servant.

The chamber had indeed a wild crazy look, enough to strike any one who had read romances with apprehension and foreboding. The windows were high and narrow, and had once been loop-holes, but had been rudely enlarged, as well as the extreme thickness of the walls would permit; and the ill-fitted casements rattled to every breeze. You would have thought, on a windy night, some of the old leaguers were tramping and clanking about the apartment in their huge boots and rattling spurs. A door which stood ajar, and, like a true French door, would stand ajar in spite of every reason and effort to the contrary, opened upon a long dark corridor, that led the Lord knows whither, and seemed just made for ghosts to air themselves in, when they turned out of their graves at midnight. The wind would spring up into a hoarse murmur through this passage, and creak the door to and fro, as if some dubious ghost were balancing in its mind whether to come in or not. In a word, it was precisely the kind of comfortless apartment that a ghost, if ghost there were in the chateau, would single out for its favourite lounge.

My uncle, however, though a man accustomed to meet with strange adventures, apprehended none at the time. He made several attempts to shut the door, but in vain. Not that he apprehended anything, for he was too old a traveller to be daunted by a wild-looking apartment; but the night, as I have said, was cold and gusty, and the wind howled about the old turret pretty much as it does round this old mansion at this moment; and the breeze from the long dark corridor came in as damp and chilly as if from a dungeon. My uncle, therefore, since he could not close the door, threw a quantity of wood on the fire, which soon sent up a flame in the great wide-mouthed chimney that illumined the whole chamber; and made the shadow of the tongs on the opposite wall look like a long-legged giant. My uncle now clambered on the top of the half score of mattresses which form a French bed, and which stood in a deep recess; then tucking himself snugly in, and bury-

ing himself up to the chin in the bed-clothes, he lay looking at the fire, and listening to the wind, and thinking how knowingly he had come over his friend the Marquis for a night's lodging—and so he fell asleep.

He had not taken above half of his first nap when he was awakened by the clock of the chateau, in the turret over his chamber, which struck midnight. It was just such an old clock as ghosts are fond of. It had a deep, dismal tone, and struck so slowly and tediously that my uncle thought it would never have done. He counted and counted till he was confident he counted thirteen, and then it stopped.

The fire had burnt low, and the blaze of the last fagot was almost expiring, burning in small blue flames, which now and then lengthened up into little white gleams. My uncle lay with his eyes half closed, and his nightcap drawn almost down to his nose. His fancy was already wandering, and began to mingle up the present scene with the crater of Vesuvius, the French Opera, the Coliseum at Rome, Dolly's chop-house in London, and all the farrago of noted places with which the brain of a traveller is crammed :—in a word, he was just falling asleep.

Suddenly he was roused by the sound of footsteps, slowly pacing along the corridor. My uncle, as I have often heard him say himself, was a man not easily frightened. So he lay quiet, supposing this some other guest, or some servant on his way to bed. The footsteps, however, approached the door; the door gently opened; whether of its own accord, or whether pushed open, my uncle could not distinguish : a figure all in white glided in. It was a female, tall and stately, and of a commanding air. Her dress was of an ancient fashion, ample in volume, and sweeping the floor. She walked up to the fireplace, without regarding my uncle, who raised his nightcap with one hand, and stared earnestly at her. She remained for some time standing by the fire, which, flashing up at intervals, cast blue and white gleams of light, that enabled my uncle to remark her appearance minutely.

Her face was ghastly pale, and perhaps rendered still more so by the bluish light of the fire. It possessed beauty, but its beauty was saddened by care and anxiety. There was the look of one accustomed to trouble, but of one whom trouble could not cast down nor subdue; for there was still the predominating air of proud unconquerable resolution. Such at least was the opinion formed by my uncle, and he considered himself a great physiognomist.

The figure remained, as I said, for some time by the fire, putting out first one hand, then the other; then each foot alternately, as if warming itself; for your ghosts, if ghost it really was, are apt to be cold. My uncle, furthermore, remarked that it wore high-heeled shoes, after an ancient fashion, with paste or diamond buckles, that sparkled as though they were alive. At length the figure turned gently round, casting a glassy look about the apart-

ment, which, as it passed over my uncle, made his blood run cold, and chilled the very marrow in his bones. It then stretched its arms towards heaven, clasped its hands, and wringing them in a supplicating manner, glided slowly out of the room.

My uncle lay for some time meditating on this visitation, for (as he remarked when he told me the story) though a man of firmness, he was also a man of reflection, and did not reject a thing because it was out of the regular course of events. However, being, as I have before said, a great traveller, and accustomed to strange adventures, he drew his nightcap resolutely over his eyes, turned his back to the door, hoisted the bed-clothes high over his shoulders, and gradually fell asleep.

How long he slept he could not say, when he was awakened by the voice of some one at his bed-side. He turned round, and beheld the old French servant, with his ear-locks in tight buckles on each side of a long lantern face, on which habit had deeply wrinkled an everlasting smile. He made a thousand grimaces, and asked a thousand pardons for disturbing Monsieur, but the morning was considerably advanced. While my uncle was dressing, he called vaguely to mind the visitor of the preceding night. He asked the ancient domestic what lady was in the habit of rambling about this part of the chateau at night. The old valet shrugged his shoulders as high as his head, laid one hand on his bosom, threw open the other with every finger extended, made a most whimsical grimace, which he meant to be complimentary, and replied, that it was not for him to know any thing of *les bonnes fortunes* of Monsieur.

My uncle saw there was nothing satisfactory to be learnt in this quarter.—After breakfast, he was walking with the Marquis through the modern apartments of the chateau, sliding over the well-waxed floors of silken saloons, amidst furniture rich in gilding and brocade, until they came to a long picture-gallery, containing many portraits, some in oil and some in chalks.

Here was an ample field for the eloquence of his host, who had all the pride of a nobleman of the *ancien régime*. There was not a grand name in Normandy, and hardly one in France, which was not, in some way or other, connected with his house. My uncle stood listening with inward impatience, resting sometimes on one leg, sometimes on the other, as the little Marquis descanted, with his usual fire and vivacity, on the achievements of his ancestors, whose portraits hung along the wall; from the martial deeds of the stern warriors in steel, to the gallantries and intrigues of the blue-eyed gentlemen, with fair smiling faces, powdered ear-locks, laced ruffles, and pink and blue silk coats and breeches;—not forgetting the conquests of the lovely shepherdesses, with hooped petticoats and waists no thicker than an hour-glass, who appeared ruling over their sheep and their swains, with dainty crooks decorated with fluttering ribands.

In the midst of his friend's discourse, my uncle was startled

on beholding a full-length portrait, the very counterpart of his visitor of the preceding night.

"Methinks," said he, pointing to it, "I have seen the original of this portrait."

"Pardonnez-moi," replied the Marquis politely, "that can hardly be, as the lady has been dead more than a hundred years. That was the beautiful Duchess de Longueville, who figured during the minority of Louis the Fourteenth."

"And was there anything remarkable in her history?"

Never was question more unlucky. The little Marquis immediately threw himself into the attitude of a man about to tell a long story. In fact, my uncle had pulled upon himself the whole history of the civil war of the Fronde, in which the beautiful Duchess had played so distinguished a part. Turenne, Coligni, Mazarine, were called up from their graves to grace his narration; nor were the affairs of the Barricadoes, nor the chivalry of the Port Cocheres forgotten. My uncle began to wish himself a thousand leagues off from the Marquis and his merciless memory, when suddenly the little man's recollections took a more interesting turn. He was relating the imprisonment of the Duke de Longueville with the Princes Condé and Conti in the chateau of Vincennes, and the ineffectual efforts of the Duchess to rouse the sturdy Normans to their rescue. He had come to that part where she was invested by the royal forces in the Castle of Dieppe.

"The spirit of the Duchess," proceeded the Marquis, "rose from her trials. It was astonishing to see so delicate and beautiful a being buffet so resolutely with hardships. She determined on a desperate means of escape. You may have seen the chateau in which she was mewed up; an old ragged wart of an edifice, standing on the knuckle of a hill, just above the rusty little town of Dieppe. One dark unruly night she issued secretly out of a small postern gate of the castle, which the enemy had neglected to guard. The postern gate is there to this very day; opening upon a narrow bridge over a deep fosse between the castle and the brow of the hill. She was followed by her female attendants, a few domestics, and some gallant cavaliers, who still remained faithful to her fortunes. Her object was to gain a small port about two leagues distant, where she had privately provided a vessel for her escape in case of emergency.

"The little band of fugitives were obliged to perform the distance on foot. When they arrived at the port, the wind was high and stormy, the tide contrary, the vessel anchored far off in the road, and no means of getting on board but by a fishing shallop, which lay tossing like a cockle-shell on the edge of the surf. The Duchess determined to risk the attempt. The seamen endeavoured to dissuade her, but the imminence of her danger on shore, and the magnanimity of her spirit, urged her on. She had to be borne to the shallop in the arms of a mariner. Such was the

violence of the winds and waves that he faltered, lost his foot-hold, and let his precious burden fall into the sea.

"The Duchess was nearly drowned, but partly through her own struggles, partly by the exertions of the seamen, she got to land. As soon as she had a little recovered strength, she insisted on renewing the attempt. The storm, however, had by this time become so violent as to set all efforts at defiance. To delay, was to be discovered and taken prisoner. As the only resource left, she procured horses, mounted with her female attendants, *en croupe*, behind the gallant gentlemen who accompanied her, and scoured the country to seek some temporary asylum.

"While the Duchess," continued the Marquis, laying his fore-finger on my uncle's breast to arouse his flagging attention,—"while the Duchess, poor lady, was wandering amid the tempest in this disconsolate manner, she arrived at this chateau. Her approach caused some uneasiness; for the clattering of a troop of horse at dead of night up the avenue of a lonely chateau, in those unsettled times, and in a troubled part of the country, was enough to occasion alarm.

"A tall broad-shouldered chasseur, armed to the teeth, galloped ahead, and announced the name of the visitor. All uneasiness was dispelled. The household turned out with flambeaux to receive her; and never did torches gleam on a more weather-beaten, travel-stained band than came tramping into the court. Such pale care-worn faces, such bedraggled dresses, as the poor Duchess and her females presented, each seated behind her cavalier; while the half-drenched, half-drowsy pages and attendants seemed ready to fall from their horses with sleep and fatigue.

"The Duchess was received with a hearty welcome by my ancestor. She was ushered into the hall of the chateau, and the fires soon crackled and blazed, to cheer herself and her train; and every spit and stew-pan was put in requisition to prepare ample refreshment for the wayfarers.

"She had a right to our hospitalities," continued the Marquis, drawing himself up with a slight degree of stateliness, "for she was related to our family. I 'll tell you how it was. Her father, Henry de Bourbon, Prince of Condé——"

"But, did the Duchess pass the night in the chateau?" said my uncle rather abruptly, terrified at the idea of getting involved in one of the Marquis's genealogical discussions.

"Oh, as to the Duchess, she was put into the very apartment you occupied last night, which at that time was a kind of state apartment. Her followers were quartered in the chambers opening upon the neighbouring corridor, and her favourite page slept in an adjoining closet. Up and down the corridor walked the great chasseur who had announced her arrival, and who acted as a kind of sentinel, or guard. He was a dark, stern, powerful-looking fellow; and as the light of a lamp in the corridor fell upon his

deeply-marked face and sinewy form, he seemed capable of defending the castle with his single arm.

"It was a rough, rude night; about this time of the year—apropos!—now I think of it, last night was the anniversary of her visit. I may well remember the precise date, for it was a night not to be forgotten by our house. There is a singular tradition concerning it in our family." Here the Marquis hesitated, and a cloud seemed to gather about his bushy eyebrows. "There is a tradition—that a strange occurrence took place that night.—A strange, mysterious, inexplicable occurrence—" Here he checked himself, and paused.

"Did it relate to that lady?" inquired my uncle eagerly.

"It was past the hour of midnight," resumed the marquis,—"when the whole chateau——" Here he paused again. My uncle made a movement of anxious curiosity.

"Excuse me," said the Marquis, a slight blush streaking his sallow visage. "There are some circumstances connected with our family history which I do not like to relate. That was a rude period. A time of great crimes among great men: for you know high blood, when it runs wrong, will not run tamely, like blood of the *canaille*—poor lady!—But I have a little family pride, that—excuse me—we will change the subject, if you please—"

My uncle's curiosity was piqued. The pompous and magnificent introduction had led him to expect something wonderful in the story to which it served as a kind of avenue. He had no idea of being cheated out of it by a sudden fit of unreasonable squeamishness. Besides, being a traveller in quest of information, he considered it his duty to inquire into every thing.

The Marquis, however, evaded every question.—"Well," said my uncle, a little petulantly, "whatever you may think of it, I saw that lady last night."

The Marquis stepped back and gazed at him with surprise.

"She paid me a visit in my bed-chamber."

"The Marquis pulled out his snuff-box with a shrug and a smile; taking this no doubt for an awkward piece of English pleasantry, which politeness required him to be charmed with.

My uncle went on gravely, however, and related the whole circumstance. The Marquis heard him through with profound attention, holding his snuff-box unopened in his hand. When the story was finished, he tapped on the lid of his box deliberately, took a long, sonorous pinch of snuff——

"Bah!" said the Marquis, and walked towards the other end of the gallery.——

Here the narrator paused. The company waited for some time for him to resume his narration; but he continued silent.

"Well," said the inquisitive gentleman—"and what did your uncle say then?"

"Nothing," replied the other.

"And what did the Marquis say farther?"

"Nothing."

"And is that all?"

"That is all," said the narrator, filling a glass of wine.

"I surmise," said the shrewd old gentleman with the waggish nose,—I surmise the ghost must have been the old housekeeper walking her rounds to see that all was right."

"Bah!" said the narrator. "My uncle was too much accustomed to strange sights not to know a ghost from a housekeeper."

There was a murmur round the table, half of merriment, half of disappointment. I was inclined to think the old gentleman had really an afterpart of his story in reserve; but he sipped his wine and said nothing more; and there was an odd expression about his dilapidated countenance which left me in doubt whether he were in drollery or earnest.

"Egad," said the knowing gentleman, with the flexible nose, "this story of your uncle puts me in mind of one that used to be told of an aunt of mine, by the mother's side; though I don't know that it will bear a comparison, as the good lady was not so prone to meet with strange adventures. But at any rate you shall have it."

THE ADVENTURE OF MY AUNT.

My aunt was a lady of large frame, strong mind, and great resolution: she was what might be termed a very manly woman. My uncle was a thin, puny little man, very meek and acquiescent, and no match for my aunt. It was observed that he dwindled and dwindled gradually away, from the day of his marriage. His wife's powerful mind was too much for him; it wore him out. My aunt, however, took all possible care of him; had half the doctors in town to prescribe for him; made him take all their prescriptions, and dosed him with physic enough to cure a whole hospital. All was in vain. My uncle grew worse and worse the more dosing and nursing he underwent, until in the end he added another to the long list of matrimonial victims who have been killed with kindness.

"And was it his ghost that appeared to her?" asked the inquisitive gentleman, who had questioned the former story-teller.

"You shall hear," replied the narrator. "My aunt took on mightily for the death of her poor dear husband. Perhaps she felt some compunction at having given him so much physic, and nursed him into the grave. At any rate, she did all that a widow could do to honour his memory. She spared no expense in either the quantity or quality of her mourning weeds; wore a miniature of him about her neck as large as a little sun-dial, and had a full-length portrait of him always hanging in her bed-chamber. All the world extolled her conduct to the skies; and it was determined that a woman who behaved so well to the memory of one husband deserved soon to get another.

It was not long after this that she went to take up her residence in an old country-seat in Derbyshire, which had long been in the care of merely a steward and housekeeper. She took most of her servants with her, intending to make it her principal abode. The house stood in a lonely, wild part of the country, among the grey Derbyshire hills, with a murderer hanging in chains on a bleak height in full view.

The servants from town were half frightened out of their wits at the idea of living in such a dismal, pagan-looking place; especially when they got together in the servants' hall in the evening, and compared notes on all the hobgoblin stories picked up in the course of the day. They were afraid to venture alone about the gloomy, black-looking chambers. My lady's maid, who was troubled with nerves, declared she could never sleep alone in such a "gashly rummaging old building;" and the footman, who was a kind-hearted young fellow, did all in his power to cheer her up.

My aunt was struck with the lonely appearance of the house. Before going to bed, therefore, she examined well the fastnesses of the doors and windows; locked up the plate with her own hands, and carried the keys, together with a little box of money and jewels, to her own room; for she was a notable woman, and always saw to all things herself. Having put the keys under her pillow, and dismissed her maid, she sat by her toilet arranging her hair; for being, in spite of her grief for my uncle, rather a buxom widow, she was somewhat particular about her person. She sat for a little while looking at her face in the glass, first on one side, then on the other, as ladies are apt to do when they would ascertain whether they have been in good looks; for a roistering country squire of the neighbourhood, with whom she had flirted when a girl, had called that day to welcome her to the country.

All of a sudden she thought she heard something move behind her. She looked hastily round, but there was nothing to be seen. Nothing but the grimly-painted portrait of her poor dear man, hanging against the wall.

She gave a heavy sigh to his memory, as she was accustomed to do whenever she spoke of him in company, and then went on adjusting her night-dress, and thinking of the squire. Her sigh was re-echoed, or answered by a long-drawn breath. She looked round again, but no one was to be seen. She ascribed these sounds to the wind oozing through the rat-holes of the old mansion, and proceeded leisurely to put her hair in papers, when, all at once, she thought she perceived one of the eyes of the portrait move.

"The back of her head being towards it!" said the story-teller with the ruined head,—"good!"

"Yes, sir!" replied dryly the narrator, "her back being towards the portrait, but her eyes fixed on its reflection in the glass." Well, as I was saying, she perceived one of the eyes of the portrait move. So strange a circumstance, as you may well

suppose, gave her a sudden shock. To assure herself of the fact, she put one hand to her forehead as if rubbing it; peeped through her fingers, and moved the candle with the other hand. The light of the taper gleamed on the eye, and was reflected from it. She was sure it moved. Nay more, it seemed to give her a wink, as she had sometimes known her husband to do when living! It struck a momentary chill to her heart; for she was a lone woman, and felt herself fearfully situated.

The chill was but transient. My aunt, who was almost as resolute a personage as your uncle, sir, (turning to the old story-teller,) became instantly calm and collected. She went on adjusting her dress. She even hummed an air, and did not make a single false note. She casually overturned a dressing-box; took a candle, and picked up the articles one by one from the floor; pursued a rolling pincushion that was making the best of its way under the bed; then opened the door; looked for an instant into the corridor, as if in doubt whether to go; and then walked quietly out.

She hastened down stairs, ordered the servants to arm themselves with the weapons first at hand, placed herself at their head, and returned almost immediately.

Her hastily-levied army presented a formidable force. The steward had a rusty blunderbuss, the coachman a loaded whip, the footman a pair of horse-pistols, the cook a huge chopping-knife, and the butler a bottle in each hand. My aunt led the van with a red-hot poker, and in my opinion she was the most formidable of the party. The waiting-maid, who dreaded to stay alone in the servants' hall, brought up the rear, smelling to a broken bottle of volatile salts, and expressing her terror of the ghostesses. "Ghosts!" said my aunt, resolutely; "I'll singe their whiskers for them!"

They entered the chamber. All was still and undisturbed as when she had left it. They approached the portrait of my uncle.

"Pull down that picture!" cried my aunt. A heavy groan, and a sound like the chattering of teeth, issued from the portrait. The servants shrunk back; the maid uttered a faint shriek, and clung to the footman for support.

"Instantly!" added my aunt, with a stamp of the foot.

The picture was pulled down, and from a recess behind it, in which had formerly stood a clock, they hauled forth a round-shouldered, black-bearded varlet, with a knife as long as my arm, but trembling all over like an aspen-leaf.

"Well, and who was he? No ghost, I suppose," said the inquisitive gentleman.

"A Knight of the Post," replied the narrator, "who had been smitten with the worth of the wealthy widow; or rather a marauding Tarquin, who had stolen into her chamber to violate her purse, and rifle her strong box, when all the house should be asleep. In plain terms," continued he, "the vagabond was a loose idle fellow

of the neighbourhood, who had once been a servant in the house, and had been employed to assist in arranging it for the reception of its mistress. He confessed that he had contrived this hiding-place for his nefarious purposes, and had borrowed an eye from the portrait by way of a reconnoitering hole."

"And what did they do with him?—did they hang him?" resumed the questioner.

"Hang him!—how could they?" exclaimed a beetle-browed barrister, with a hawk's nose. "The offence was not capital. No robbery, no assault had been committed. No forcible entry or breaking into the premises—"

"My aunt," said the narrator, "was a woman of spirit, and apt to take the law in her own hands. She had her own notions of cleanliness also. She ordered the fellow to be drawn through the horse-pond, to cleanse away all offences, and then to be well rubbed down with an oaken towel."

"And what became of him afterwards?" said the inquisitive gentleman.

"I do not exactly know. I believe he was sent on a voyage of improvement to Botany Bay."

"And your aunt," said the inquisitive gentleman; "I'll warrant she took care to make her maid sleep in the room with her after that."

"No, sir, she did better; she gave her hand shortly after to the roistering squire; for she used to observe, that it was a dismal thing for a woman to sleep alone in the country."

"She was right," observed the inquisitive gentleman, nodding sagaciously; "but I am sorry they did not hang that fellow."

It was agreed on all hands that the last narrator had brought his tale to the most satisfactory conclusion, though a country clergyman present regretted that the uncle and aunt, who figured in the different stories, had not been married together; they certainly would have been well matched.

"But I don't see, after all," said the inquisitive gentleman, "that there was any ghost in this last story."

"Oh! If it 's ghosts you want, honey," cried the Irish Captain of Dragoons,—"if it 's ghosts you want, you shall have a whole regiment of them. And since these gentlemen have given the adventures of their uncles and aunts, faith, and I'll even give you a chapter out of my own family history."

THE BOLD DRAGOON; OR, THE ADVENTURE OF MY GRANDFATHER.

My grandfather was a bold dragoon, for it's a profession, d'ye see, that has run in the family. All my forefathers have been dragoons, and died on the field of honour, except myself, and I hope my posterity may be able to say the same; however, I don't mean

to be vain-glorious. Well, my grandfather, as I said, was a bold dragoon, and had served in the Low Countries. In fact, he was one of that very army, which, according to my uncle Toby, swore so terribly in Flanders. He could swear a good stick himself; and moreover was the very man that introduced the doctrine Corporal Trim mentions of radical heat and radical moisture; or, in other words, the mode of keeping out the damps of ditch-water by burnt brandy. Be that as it may, it's nothing to the purport of my story. I only tell it to show you that my grandfather was a man not easily to be humbugged. He had seen service, or, according to his own phrase, he had seen the devil—and that's saying every thing.

Well, gentlemen, my grandfather was on his way to England, for which he intended to embark from Ostend—bad luck to the place! for one where I was kept by storms and headwinds for three long days, and the devil of a jolly companion or pretty face to comfort me. Well, as I was saying, my grandfather was on his way to England, or rather to Ostend—no matter which, it's all the same. So one evening, towards nightfall, he rode jollily into Bruges. —Very like you all know Bruges, gentlemen; a queer old-fashioned Flemish town, once, they say, a great place for trade and money-making in old times, when the Mynheers were in their glory; but almost as large and as empty as an Irishman's pocket at the present day.—Well, gentlemen, it was at the time of the annual fair. All Bruges was crowded; and the canals swarmed with Dutch boats, and the streets swarmed with Dutch merchants; and there was hardly any getting along for goods, wares, and merchandises, and peasants in big breeches, and women in half a score of petticoats.

My grandfather rode jollily along, in his easy slashing way, for he was a saucy, sunshiny fellow—staring about him at the motley crowd, and the old houses with gable ends to the street, and storks' nests in the chimneys; winking at the yafrows who showed their faces at the windows, and joking the women right and left in the street; all of whom laughed, and took it in amazing good part; for though he did not know a word of the language, yet he had always a knack of making himself understood among the women.

Well, gentlemen, it being the time of the annual fair, all the town was crowded, every inn and tavern full, and my grandfather applied in vain from one to the other for admittance. At length he rode up to an old ricketty inn that looked ready to fall to pieces, and which all the rats would have run away from, if they could have found room in any other house to put their heads. It was just such a queer building as you see in Dutch pictures, with a tall roof that reached up into the clouds, and as many garrets, one over the other, as the seven heavens of Mahomet. Nothing had saved it from tumbling down but a stork's nest on the chimney, which always brings good luck to a house in the Low Countries; and at the very time of my grandfather's arrival, there were two of these long-legged birds of grace standing like ghosts on the chimney-

top. Faith, but they've kept the house on its legs to this very day, for you may see it any time you pass through Bruges, as it stands there yet, only it is turned into a brewery of strong Flemish beer,—at least it was so when I came that way after the battle of Waterloo.

My grandfather eyed the house curiously as he approached. It might not have altogether struck his fancy, had he not seen in large letters over the door, "HEER VERKOOPT MAN GOEDEN DRANK." My grandfather had learnt enough of the language to know that the sign promised good liquor. "This is the house for me," said he, stopping short before the door.

The sudden appearance of a dashing dragoon was an event in an old inn, frequented only by the peaceful sons of traffic. A rich burgher of Antwerp, a stately ample man in a broad Flemish hat, and who was the great man and great patron of the establishment, sat smoking a clean long pipe on one side of the door; a fat little distiller of Geneva, from Schiedam, sat smoking on the other; and the bottle-nosed host stood in the door, and the comely hostess, in crimped cap, beside him: and the hostess's daughter, a plump Flanders lass, with long gold pendants in her ears, was at a side window.

"Humph!" said the rich burgher of Antwerp, with a sulky glance at the stranger.

"De duyvel!" said the fat little distiller of Schiedam.

The landlord saw, with the quick glance of a publican, that the new guest was not at all to the taste of the old ones; and, to tell the truth, he did not like my grandfather's saucy eye. He shook his head. "Not a garret in the house but was full."

"Not a garret!" echoed the landlady.

"Not a garret!" echoed the daughter.

The burgher of Antwerp, and the little distiller of Schiedam, continued to smoke their pipes sullenly, eyeing the enemy askance from under their broad hats, but said nothing.

My grandfather was not a man to be browbeaten. He threw the reins on his horse's neck, cocked his head on one side, stuck one arm akimbo,—"Faith and troth!" said he, "but I'll sleep in this house this very night."—As he said this he gave a slap on his thigh, by way of emphasis—the slap went to the landlady's heart.

He followed up the vow by jumping off his horse, and making his way past the staring Mynheers into the public room.—May be you've been in the bar-room of an old Flemish inn—faith, but a handsome chamber it was as you'd wish to see; with a brick floor, and a great fireplace, with the whole Bible history in glazed tiles; and then the mantel-piece, pitching itself head foremost out of the wall, with a whole regiment of cracked teapots and earthen jugs paraded on it; not to mention half a dozen great Delft platters, hung about the room by way of pictures; and the little bar in one corner, and the bouncing bar-maid inside of it, with a red calico cap and yellow ear-drops.

My grandfather snapped his fingers over his head, as he cast an

eye round the room—"Faith, this is the very house I've been looking after," said he.

There was some further show of resistance on the part of the garrison: but my grandfather was an old soldier, and an Irishman to boot, and not easily repulsed, especially after he had got into the fortress. So he blarneyed the landlord, kissed the landlord's wife, tickled the landlord's daughter, chucked the bar-maid under the chin; and it was agreed on all hands that it would be a thousand pities, and a burning shame into the bargain, to turn such a bold dragoon into the streets. So they laid their heads together, that is to say, my grandfather and the landlady, and it was at length agreed to accommodate him with an old chamber that had been for some time shut up.

"Some say it's haunted," whispered the landlord's daughter; "but you are a bold dragoon, and I dare say don't fear ghosts."

"The devil a bit!" said my grandfather, pinching her plump cheek. "But if I should be troubled by ghosts, I've been to the Red Sea in my time, and have a pleasant way of laying them, my darling."

And then he whispered something to the girl which made her laugh, and give him a good-humoured box on the ear. In short, there was nobody knew better how to make his way among the petticoats than my grandfather.

In a little while, as was his usual way, he took complete possession of the house, swaggering all over it; into the stable to look after his horse, into the kitchen to look after his supper. He had something to say or do with every one; smoked with the Dutchmen, drank with the Germans, slapped the landlord on the shoulder, romped with his daughter and the bar-maid:—never, since the days of Alley Croaker, had such a rattling blade been seen. The landlord stared at him with astonishment; the landlord's daughter hung her head and giggled whenever he came near; and as he swaggered along the corridor, with his sword trailing by his side, the maids looked after him, and whispered to one another, "What a proper man!"

At supper, my grandfather took command of the table-d'hôte as though he had been at home; helped every body, not forgetting himself; talked with every one, whether he understood their language or not; and made his way into the intimacy of the rich burgher of Antwerp, who had never been known to be sociable with any one during his life. In fact, he revolutionized the whole establishment, and gave it such a rouse that the very house reeled with it. He outsat every one at table excepting the little fat distiller of Schiedam, who sat soaking a long time before he broke forth; but when he did, he was a very devil incarnate. He took a violent affection for my grandfather; so they sat drinking and smoking, and telling stories, and singing Dutch and Irish songs, without understanding a word each other said, until the little

Hollander was fairly swamped with his own gin and water, and carried off to bed, whooping and hiekuping, and trolling the burden of a Low Dutch love-song.

Well, gentlemen, my grandfather was shown to his quarters up a large staircase, composed of loads of hewn timber; and through long rigmarole passages, hung with blackened paintings of fish, and fruit, and game, and country frolics, and huge kitchens, and portly burgomasters, such as you see about old-fashioned Flemish inns, till at length he arrived at his room.

An old-times chamber it was, sure enough, and crowded with all kinds of trumpery. It looked like an infirmary for decayed and superannuated furniture, where everything diseased or disabled was sent to nurse or to be forgotten. Or rather it might be taken for a general congress of old legitimate movables, where every kind and country had a representative. No two chairs were alike. Such high backs and low backs, and leather bottoms and worsted bottoms, and straw bottoms, and no bottoms; and cracked marble tables with curiously carved legs, holding balls in their claws, as though they were going to play at nine-pins.

My grandfather made a bow to the motley assemblage as he entered, and, having undressed himself, placed his light in the fireplace, asking pardon of the tongs, which seemed to be making love to the shovel in the chimney-corner, and whispering soft nonsense in its ear.

The rest of the guests were by this time sound asleep, for your Mynheers are huge sleepers. The housemaids, one by one, crept up yawning to their attics; and not a female head in the inn was laid on a pillow that night without dreaming of the bold dragoon.

My grandfather, for his part, got into bed, and drew over him one of those great bags of down, under which they smother a man in the Low Countries; and there he lay, melting between two feather beds, like an anchovy sandwich between two slices of toast and butter. He was a warm-complexioned man, and this smothering played the very deuce with him. So, sure enough, in a little time it seemed as if a legion of imps were twitching at him, and all the blood in his veins was in a fever heat.

He lay still, however, until all the house was quiet, excepting the snoring of the Mynheers from the different chambers; who answered one another in all kinds of tones and cadences, like so many bull-frogs in a swamp. The quieter the house became, the more unquiet became my grandfather. He waxed warmer and warmer, until at length the bed became too hot to hold him.

"May be the maid had warmed it too much?" said the curious gentleman, inquiringly.

"I rather think the contrary," replied the Irishman. "But, be that as it may, it grew too hot for my grandfather."

"Faith, there's no standing this any longer," says he. So he jumped out of bed and went strolling about the house.

"What for?" said the inquisitive gentleman.

"Why to cool himself, to be sure—or perhaps to find a more comfortable bed—or perhaps—But no matter what he went for — he never mentioned—and there's no use in taking up our time in conjecturing."

Well, my grandfather had been for some time absent from his room, and was returning, perfectly cool, when just as he reached the door he heard a strange noise within. He paused and listened. It seemed as if some one were trying to hum a tune in defiance of the asthma. He recollected the report of the room being haunted; but he was no believer in ghosts, so he pushed the door gently open and peeped in.

Egad, gentlemen, there was a gambol carrying on within enough to have astonished St. Anthony himself. By the light of the fire he saw a pale weazen-faced fellow, in a long flannel gown and a tall white night-cap with a tassel to it, who sat by the fire with a bellows under his arm by way of bagpipe, from which he forced the asthmatical music that had bothered my grandfather. As he played, too, he kept twitching about with a thousand queer contortions, nodding his head, and bobbing about his tasselled night-cap.

My grandfather thought this very odd and mighty presumptuous, and was about to demand what business he had to play his wind instrument in another gentleman's quarters, when a new cause of astonishment met his eye. From the opposite side of the room a long-backed, bandy-legged chair, covered with leather, and studded all over in a coxcombical fashion with little brass nails, got suddenly into motion, thrust out first a claw-foot, then a crooked arm, and at length, making a leg, slided gracefully up to an easy chair of tarnished brocade, with a hole in its bottom, and led it gallantly out in a ghostly minuet about the floor.

The musician now played fiercer and fiercer, and bobbed his head and his night-cap about like mad. By degrees the dancing mania seemed to seize upon all the other pieces of furniture. The antique, long-bodied chairs paired off in couples and led down a country dance; a three-legged stool danced a hornpipe, though horribly puzzled by its supernumerary limb; while the amorous tongs seized the shovel round the waist, and whirled it about the room in a German waltz. In short, all the movables got in motion: pirouetting hands across, right and left, like so many devils; all except a great clothes-press, which kept courtesying and courtesying in a corner, like a dowager, in exquisite time to the music; being rather too corpulent to dance, or perhaps at a loss for a partner.

My grandfather concluded the latter to be the reason; so being, like a true Irishman, devoted to the sex, and at all times ready for a frolic, he bounced into the room, called to the musician to strike up Paddy O'Rafferty, capered up to the clothes-press, and seized upon the two handles to lead her out:——when—whirr! the

whole revel was at an end. The chairs, tables, tongs, and shovel, slunk in an instant as quietly into their places as if nothing had happened, and the musician vanished up the chimney, leaving the bellows behind him in his hurry. My grandfather found himself seated in the middle of the floor with the clothes-press sprawling before him, and the two handles jerked off, and in his hands.

"Then, after all, this was a mere dream!" said the inquisitive gentleman.

"The divil a bit of a dream!" replied the Irishman. "There never was a truer fact in this world. Faith, I should have liked to see any man tell my grandfather it was a dream."

Well, gentlemen, as the clothes-press was a mighty heavy body, and my grandfather likewise, particularly in rear, you may easily suppose that two such heavy bodies coming to the ground would make a bit of a noise. Faith, the old mansion shook as though it had mistaken it for an earthquake. The whole garrison was alarmed. The landlord, who slept below, hurried up with a candle to inquire the cause, but with all his haste his daughter had arrived at the scene of uproar before him. The landlord was followed by the landlady, who was followed by the bouncing barmaid, who was followed by the simpering chamber-maids, all holding together, as well as they could, such garments as they had first laid hands on; but all in a terrible hurry to see what the deuce was to pay in the chamber of the bold dragoon.

My grandfather related the marvellous scene he had witnessed, and the broken handles of the prostrate clothes-press bore testimony to the fact. There was no contesting such evidence; particularly with a lad of my grandfather's complexion, who seemed able to make good every word either with sword or shillelah. So the landlord scratched his head and looked silly, as he was apt to do when puzzled. The landlady scratched—no, she did not scratch her head, but she knit her brow, and did not seem half pleased with the explanation. But the landlady's daughter corroborated it by recollecting that the last person who had dwelt in that chamber was a famous juggler who had died of St. Vitus's dance, and had no doubt infected all the furniture.

This set all things to rights, particularly when the chamber-maids declared that they had all witnessed strange carryings on in that room; and as they declared this "upon their honours," there could not remain a doubt upon the subject.

"And did your grandfather go to bed again in that room?" said the inquisitive gentleman.

"That's more than I can tell. Where he passed the rest of the night was a secret he never disclosed. In fact, though he had seen much service, he was but indifferently acquainted with geography, and apt to make blunders in his travels about inns at night, which it would have puzzled him sadly to account for in the morning."

"Was he ever apt to walk in his sleep?" said the knowing old gentleman.

"Never that I heard of."

There was a little pause after this rigmarole Irish romance, when the old gentleman with the haunted head observed, that the stories hitherto related had rather a burlesque tendency. "I recollect an adventure, however," added he, "which I heard of during a residence at Paris, for the truth of which I can undertake to vouch, and which is of a very grave and singular nature."

THE ADVENTURE OF THE GERMAN STUDENT.

On a stormy night, in the tempestuous times of the French revolution, a young German was returning to his lodgings, at a late hour, across the old part of Paris. The lightning gleamed, and the loud claps of thunder rattled through the lofty narrow streets—but I should first tell you something about this young German.

Gottfried Wolfgang was a young man of good family. He had studied for some time at Gottingen, but being of a visionary and enthusiastic character, he had wandered into those wild and speculative doctrines which have so often bewildered German students. His secluded life, his intense application, and the singular nature of his studies, had an effect on both mind and body. His health was impaired; his imagination diseased. He had been indulging in fanciful speculations on spiritual essences, until, like Swedenborg, he had an ideal world of his own around him. He took up a notion, I do not know from what cause, that there was an evil influence hanging over him; an evil genius or spirit seeking to ensnare him and ensure his perdition. Such an idea working on his melancholy temperament, produced the most gloomy effects. He became haggard and desponding. His friends discovered the mental malady preying upon him, and determined that the best cure was a change of scene; he was sent, therefore, to finish his studies amidst the splendours and gaieties of Paris.

Wolfgang arrived at Paris at the breaking out of the revolution. The popular delirium at first caught his enthusiastic mind, and he was captivated by the political and philosophical theories of the day: but the scenes of blood which followed shocked his sensitive nature; disgusted him with society and the world, and made him more than ever a recluse. He shut himself up in a solitary apartment in the *Pays Latin*, the quarter of students. There, in a gloomy street not far from the monastic walls of the Sorbonne, he pursued his favourite speculations. Sometimes he spent hours together in the great libraries of Paris, those catacombs of departed authors, rummaging among their hoards of dusty and obsolete works in quest of food for his unhealthy appetite. He was, in a manner, a literary ghoul, feeding in the charnel-house of decayed literature.

Wolfgang, though solitary and recluse, was of an ardent temperament, but for a time it operated merely upon his imagination. He was too shy and ignorant of the world to make any advances to the fair, but he was a passionate admirer of female beauty, and in his lonely chamber would often lose himself in reveries on forms and faces which he had seen, and his fancy would deck out images of loveliness far surpassing the reality.

While his mind was in this excited and sublimated state, a dream produced an extraordinary effect upon him. It was of a female face of transcendent beauty. So strong was the impression made, that he dreamt of it again and again. It haunted his thoughts by day, his slumbers by night; in fine, he became passionately enamoured of this shadow of a dream. This lasted so long that it became one of those fixed ideas which haunt the minds of melancholy men, and are at times mistaken for madness.

Such was Gottfried Wolfgang, and such his situation at the time I mentioned. He was returning home late one stormy night, through some of the old and gloomy streets of the *Marais*, the ancient part of Paris. The loud claps of thunder rattled among the high houses of the narrow streets. He came to the Place de Grève, the square where public executions are performed. The lightning quivered about the pinnacles of the ancient Hotel de Ville, and shed flickering gleams over the open space in front. As Wolfgang was crossing the square, he shrank back with horror at finding himself close by the guillotine. It was the height of the reign of terror, when this dreadful instrument of death stood ever ready, and its scaffold was continuously running with the blood of the virtuous and the brave. It had that very day been actively employed in the work of carnage, and there it stood in grim array, amidst a silent and sleeping city, waiting for fresh victims.

Wolfgang's heart sickened within him, and he was turning shuddering from the horrible engine, when he beheld a shadowy form, cowering as it were at the foot of the steps which led up to the scaffold. A succession of vivid flashes of lightning revealed it more distinctly. It was a female figure, dressed in black. She was seated on one of the lower steps of the scaffold, leaning forward, her face hid in her lap; and her long dishevelled tresses hanging to the ground, streaming with the rain which fell in torrents. Wolfgang paused. There was something awful in this solitary monument of woe. The female had the appearance of being above the common order. He knew the times to be full of vicissitude, and that many a fair head, which had once been pillowed on down, now wandered houseless. Perhaps this was some poor mourner whom the dreadful axe had rendered desolate, and who sat here heart-broken on the strand of existence, from which all that was dear to her had been launched into eternity.

He approached, and addressed her in the accents of sympathy. She raised her head and gazed wildly at him. What was his

astonishment at beholding, by the bright glare of the lightning, the very face which had haunted him in his dreams. It was pale and disconsolate, but ravishingly beautiful.

Trembling with violent and conflicting emotions, Wolfgang again accosted her. He spoke something of her being exposed at such an hour of the night, and to the fury of such a storm, and offered to conduct her to her friends. She pointed to the guillotine with a gesture of dreadful signification.

"I have no friend on earth!" said she.

"But you have a home," said Wolfgang.

"Yes—in the grave!"

The heart of the student melted at the words.

"If a stranger dare make an offer," said he, "without danger of being misunderstood, I would offer my humble dwelling as a shelter; myself as a devoted friend. I am friendless myself in Paris, and a stranger in the land; but if my life could be of service, it is at your disposal, and should be sacrificed before harm or indignity should come to you."

There was an honest earnestness in the young man's manner that had its effect. His foreign accent, too, was in his favour; it showed him not to be a hackneyed inhabitant of Paris. Indeed, there is an eloquence in true enthusiasm that is not to be doubted. The homeless stranger confided herself implicitly to the protection of the student.

He supported her faltering steps across the Pont Neuf, and by the place where the statue of Henry the Fourth had been overthrown by the populace. The storm had abated, and the thunder rumbled at a distance. All Paris was quiet; that great volcano of human passion slumbered for a while, to gather fresh strength for the next day's eruption. The student conducted his charge through the ancient streets of the *Pays Latin*, and by the dusky walls of the Sorbonne, to the great dingy hotel which he inhabited. The old portress who admitted them stared with surprise at the unusual sight of the melancholy Wolfgang with a female companion.

On entering his apartment, the student, for the first time, blushed at the scantiness and indifference of his dwelling. He had but one chamber—an old-fashioned saloon—heavily carved, and fantastically furnished with the remains of former magnificence, for it was one of those hotels in the quarter of the Luxembourg palace which had once belonged to nobility. It was lumbered with books and papers, and all the usual apparatus of a student, and his bed stood in a recess at one end.

When lights were brought, and Wolfgang had a better opportunity of contemplating the stranger, he was more than ever intoxicated by her beauty. Her face was pale, but of a dazzling fairness, set off by a profusion of raven hair that hung clustering about it. Her eyes were large and brilliant, with a singular expression approaching almost to wildness. As far as her black

dress permitted her shape to be seen, it was of perfect symmetry. Her whole appearance was highly striking, though she was dressed in the simplest style. The only thing approaching to an ornament which she wore, was a broad black band round her neck, clasped by diamonds.

The perplexity now commenced with the student how to dispose of the helpless being thus thrown upon his protection. He thought of abandoning his chamber to her, and seeking shelter for himself elsewhere. Still he was so fascinated by her charms, there seemed to be such a spell upon his thoughts and senses, that he could not tear himself from her presence. Her manner, too, was singular and unaccountable. She spoke no more of the guillotine. Her grief had abated. The attentions of the student had first won her confidence, and then, apparently, her heart. She was evidently an enthusiast like himself, and enthusiasts soon understand each other.

In the infatuation of the moment, Wolfgang avowed his passion for her. He told her the story of his mysterious dream, and how she had possessed his heart before he had even seen her. She was strangely affected by his recital, and acknowledged to have felt an impulse towards him equally unaccountable. It was the time for wild theory and wild actions. Old prejudices and superstitions were done away; every thing was under the sway of the "Goddess of Reason." Among other rubbish of the old times, the forms and ceremonies of marriage began to be considered superfluous bonds for honourable minds. Social compacts were the vogue. Wolfgang was too much of a theorist not to be tainted by the liberal doctrines of the day.

"Why should we separate?" said he: "our hearts are united; in the eye of reason and honour we are as one. What need is there of sordid forms to bind high souls together?"

The stranger listened with emotion: she had evidently received illumination at the same school.

"You have no home nor family," continued he; "let me be every thing to you, or rather let us be every thing to one another. If form is necessary, form shall be observed—there is my hand. I pledge myself to you for ever."

"For ever?" said the stranger, solemnly.

"For ever!" repeated Wolfgang.

The stranger clasped the hand extended to her: "Then I am yours," murmured she, and sank upon his bosom.

The next morning the student left his bride sleeping, and sallied forth at an early hour to seek more spacious apartments, suitable to the change in his situation. When he returned, he found the stranger lying with her head hanging over the bed, and one arm thrown over it. He spoke to her, but received no reply. He advanced to awaken her from her uneasy posture. On taking her hand, it was cold—there was no pulsation—her face was pallid and ghastly.—In a word—she was a corpse.

Horrified and frantic, he alarmed the house. A scene of confusion ensued. The police was summoned. As the officer of police entered the room, he started back on beholding the corpse.

"Great heaven!" cried he, "how did this woman come here?"

"Do you know any thing about her?" said Wolfgang, eagerly.

"Do I?" exclaimed the police officer: "she was guillotined yesterday."

He stepped forward; undid the black collar round the neck of the corpse, and the head rolled on the floor!

The student burst into a frenzy. "The fiend! the fiend has gained possession of me!" shrieked he: "I am lost for ever."

They tried to soothe him, but in vain. He was possessed with the frightful belief that an evil spirit had reanimated the dead body to ensnare him. He went distracted, and died in a mad-house.

Here the old gentleman with the haunted head finished his narrative.

"And is this really a fact?" said the inquisitive gentleman.

"A fact not to be doubted," replied the other. "I had it from the best authority. The student told it me himself. I saw him in a mad-house at Paris.

THE ADVENTURE OF THE MYSTERIOUS PICTURE.

As one story of the kind produces another, and as all the company seemed fully engrossed by the subject, and disposed to bring their relatives and ancestors upon the scene, there is no knowing how many more strange adventures we might have heard, had not a corpulent old fox-hunter, who had slept soundly through the whole, now suddenly awakened, with a loud and long-drawn yawn. The sound broke the charm: the ghosts took to flight, as though it had been cock-crowing, and there was a universal move for bed.

"And now for the haunted chamber," said the Irish Captain, taking his candle.

"Ay, who's to be the hero of the night?" said the gentleman with the ruined head.

"That we shall see in the morning," said the old gentleman with the nose: "whoever looks pale and grizzly will have seen the ghost."

"Well, gentlemen," said the Baronet, "there's many a true thing said in jest—in fact, one of you will sleep in the room to-night——"

"What—a haunted room?—a haunted room?—I claim the adventure—and I—and I—and I," said a dozen guests, talking and laughing at the same time.

"No, no," said mine host, "there is a secret about one of my rooms on which I feel disposed to try an experiment: so, gentlemen, none of you shall know who has the haunted chamber until circumstances reveal it. I will not even know it myself, but will leave it to chance and the allotment of the housekeeper. At the

same time, if it will be any satisfaction to you, I will observe, for the honour of my paternal mansion, that there's scarcely a chamber in it but is well worthy of being haunted."

We now separated for the night, and each went to his allotted room. Mine was in one wing of the building, and I could not but smile at its resemblance in style to those eventful apartments described in the tales of the supper-table. It was spacious and gloomy, decorated with lampblack portraits; a bed of ancient damask, with a tester sufficiently lofty to grace a couch of state, and a number of massive pieces of old-fashioned furniture. I drew a great claw-footed arm-chair before the wide fireplace; stirred up the fire; sat looking into it, and musing upon the odd stories I had heard, until, partly overcome by the fatigue of the day's hunting, and partly by the wine and wassail of mine host, I fell asleep in my chair.

The uneasiness of my position made my slumber troubled, and laid me at the mercy of all kinds of wild and fearful dreams. Now it was that my perfidious dinner and supper rose in rebellion against my peace. I was hag-ridden by a fat saddle of mutton; a plum-pudding weighed like lead upon my conscience; the merry-thought of a capon filled me with horrible suggestions; and a deviled-leg of a turkey stalked in all kinds of diabolical shapes through my imagination. In short, I had a violent fit of the nightmare. Some strange indefinite evil seemed hanging over me which I could not avert; something terrible and loathsome oppressed me which I could not shake off. I was conscious of being asleep, and strove to rouse myself, but every effort redoubled the evil; until gasping, struggling, almost strangling, I suddenly sprang bolt upright in my chair, and awoke.

The light on the mantel-piece had burnt low, and the wick was divided; there was a great winding-sheet made by the dripping wax on the side towards me. The disordered taper emitted a broad flaring flame, and threw a strong light on a painting over the fireplace which I had not hitherto observed. It consisted merely of a head, or rather a face, staring full upon me, with an expression that was startling. It was without a frame, and at the first glance I could hardly persuade myself that it was not a real face thrusting itself out of the dark oaken panel. I sat in my chair gazing at it, and the more I gazed, the more it disquieted me. I had never before been affected in the same way by any painting. The emotions it caused were strange and indefinite. They were something like what I have heard ascribed to the eyes of the basilisk, or like that mysterious influence in reptiles termed fascination. I passed my hand over my eyes several times, as if seeking instinctively to brush away the illusion—in vain. They instantly reverted to the picture, and its chilling, creeping influence over my flesh and blood was redoubled. I looked round the room on other pictures, either to divert my attention, or to see whether the same effect would be produced by them. Some of

them were grim enough to produce the effect, if the mere grimness of the painting produced it.—No such thing—my eye passed over them all with perfect indifference, but the moment it reverted to this visage over the fireplace, it was as if an electric shock darted through me. The other pictures were dim and faded, but this one protruded from a plain background in the strongest relief, and with wonderful truth of colouring. The expression was that of agony—the agony of intense bodily pain; but a menace scowled upon the brow, and a few sprinklings of blood added to its ghastliness. Yet it was not all these characteristics; it was some horror of the mind, some inscrutable antipathy awakened by this picture, which harrowed up my feelings.

I tried to persuade myself that this was chimerical; that my brain was confused by the fumes of mine host's good cheer, and in some measure by the odd stories about paintings which had been told at supper. I determined to shake off these vapours of the mind; rose from my chair; walked about the room; snapped my fingers; rallied myself; laughed aloud.—It was a forced laugh, and the echo of it in the old chamber jarred upon my ear.—I walked to the window, and tried to discern the landscape through the glass. It was pitch darkness, and a howling storm without; and as I heard the wind moan among the trees, I caught a reflection of this accursed visage in the pane of glass, as though it were staring through the window at me. Even the reflection of it was thrilling.

How was this vile nervous fit, for such I now persuaded myself it was, to be conquered? I determined to force myself not to look at the painting, but to undress quickly and get into bed.—I began to undress, but in spite of every effort I could not keep myself from stealing a glance every now and then at the picture; and a glance was sufficient to distress me. Even when my back was turned to it, the idea of this strange face behind me, peeping over my shoulder, was insupportable. I threw off my clothes and hurried into bed, but still this visage gazed upon me. I had a full view of it in my bed, and for some time could not take my eyes from it. I had grown nervous to a dismal degree. I put out the light, and tried to force myself to sleep—all in vain. The fire gleaming up a little threw an uncertain light about the room, leaving, however, the region of the picture in deep shadow. What, thought I, if this be the chamber about which mine host spoke as having a mystery reigning over it? I had taken his words merely as spoken in jest; might they have a real import? I looked around. The faintly lighted apartment had all the qualifications requisite for a haunted chamber. It began in my infected imagination to assume strange appearances—the old portraits turned paler and paler, and blacker and blacker; the streaks of light and shadow thrown among the quaint articles of furniture gave them more singular shapes and characters.—There was a huge dark clothes-

press of antique form, gorgeous in brass and lustrous with wax, that began to grow oppressive to me.

"Am I then," thought I, "indeed the hero of the haunted room?—Is there really a spell laid upon me, or is this all some contrivance of mine host to raise a laugh at my expense?" The idea of being hag-ridden by my own fancy all night, and then bantered on my haggard looks the next day, was intolerable; but the very idea was sufficient to produce the effect, and to render me still more nervous.—"Pish," said I, "it can be no such thing. How could my worthy host imagine that I, or any man, would be so worried by a mere picture? It is my own diseased imagination that torments me."

I turned in bed, and shifted from side to side to try to fall asleep; but all in vain; when one cannot get asleep by lying quiet, it is seldom that tossing about will effect the purpose. The fire gradually went out, and left the room in darkness. Still I had the idea of that inexplicable countenance gazing and keeping watch upon me through the gloom—nay, what was worse, the very darkness seemed to magnify its terrors. It was like having an unseen enemy hanging about one in the night. Instead of having one picture now to worry me, I had a hundred. I fancied it in every direction—"There it is," thought I, "and there! and there! with its horrible and mysterious expression still gazing and gazing on me! No—if I must suffer the strange and dismal influence, it were better face a single foe than thus be haunted by a thousand images of it."

Whoever has been in a state of nervous agitation, must know that the longer it continues the more uncontrollable it grows. The very air of the chamber seemed at length infected by the baleful presence of this picture. I fancied it hovering over me. I almost felt the fearful visage from the wall approaching my face—it seemed breathing upon me. "This is not to be borne," said I, at length, springing out of bed: "I can stand this no longer—I shall only tumble and toss about here all night; make a very spectre of myself, and become the hero of the haunted chamber in good earnest. Whatever be the ill consequences, I'll quit this cursed room and seek a night's rest elsewhere—they can but laugh at me at all events, and they'll be sure to have the laugh upon me if I pass a sleepless night, and show them a haggard and wobegone visage in the morning."

All this was half-muttered to myself as I hastily slipped on my clothes, which having done, I groped my way out of the room, and down stairs to the drawing-room. Here, after tumbling over two or three pieces of furniture, I made out to reach a sofa, and stretching myself upon it, determined to bivouac there for the night. The moment I found myself out of the neighbourhood of that strange picture, it seemed as if the charm were broken. All its influence was at an end. I felt assured that it was confined to

its own dreary chamber, for I had, with a sort of instinctive caution, turned the key when I closed the door. I soon calmed down, therefore, into a state of tranquillity; from that into drowsiness, and, finally, into a deep sleep; out of which I did not awake until the housemaid, with her besom and her matin song, came to put the room in order. She stared at finding me stretched upon the sofa, but I presume circumstances of the kind were not uncommon after hunting-dinners in her master's bachelor establishment, for she went on with her song and her work, and took no further heed of me.

I had an unconquerable repugnance to return to my chamber; so I found my way to the butler's quarters, made my toilet in the best way circumstances would permit, and was among the first to appear at the breakfast-table. Our breakfast was a substantial fox-hunter's repast, and the company generally assembled at it. When ample justice had been done to the tea, coffee, cold meats, and humming ale, for all these were furnished in abundance, according to the tastes of the different guests, the conversation began to break out with all the liveliness and freshness of morning mirth.

"But who is the hero of the haunted chamber—who has seen the ghost last night?" said the inquisitive gentleman, rolling his lobster eyes about the table.

The question set every tongue in motion; a vast deal of bantering, criticising of countenances, of mutual accusation and retort, took place. Some had drunk deep, and some were unshaven; so that there were suspicious faces enough in the assembly. I alone could not enter with ease and vivacity into the joke—I felt tongue-tied, embarrassed. A recollection of what I had seen and felt the preceding night still haunted my mind. It seemed as if the mysterious picture still held a thrall upon me. I thought also that our host's eye was turned on me with an air of curiosity. In short, I was conscious that I was the hero of the night, and felt as if every one might read it in my looks. The joke, however, passed over, and no suspicion seemed to attach to me. I was just congratulating myself on my escape, when a servant came in saying, that the gentleman who had slept on the sofa in the drawing-room had left his watch under one of the pillows. My repeater was in his hand.

"What!" said the inquisitive gentleman, "did any gentleman sleep on the sofa?"

"Soho! soho! a hare—a hare!" cried the old gentleman with the flexible nose.

I could not avoid acknowledging the watch, and was rising in great confusion, when a boisterous old squire who sat beside me exclaimed, slapping me on the shoulder, "'Sblood, lad, thou art the man as has seen the ghost!"

The attention of the company was immediately turned to me: if my face had been pale the moment before, it now glowed almost to burning. I tried to laugh, but could only make a grimace, and

found the muscles of my face twitching at sixes and sevens, and totally out of all control.

It takes but little to raise a laugh among a set of fox-hunters; there was a world of merriment and joking on the subject, and as I never relished a joke overmuch when it was at my own expense, I began to feel a little nettled. I tried to look cool and calm, and to restrain my pique; but the coolness and calmness of a man in a passion are confounded treacherous.

"Gentlemen," said I, with a slight cocking of the chin, and a bad attempt at a smile, "this is all very pleasant—ha! ha!—very pleasant—but I'd have you know, I am as little superstitious as any of you—ha! ha!—and as to anything like timidity—you may smile, gentlemen, but I trust there's no one here means to insinuate, that—as to a room's being haunted—I repeat, gentlemen, (growing a little warm at seeing a cursed grin breaking out round me,) as to a room's being haunted, I have as little faith in such silly stories as any one. But, since you put the matter home to me, I will say that I have met with something in my room strange and inexplicable to me. (A shout of laughter.) Gentlemen, I am serious; I know well what I am saying; I am calm, gentlemen, (striking my fist upon the table,) by Heaven, I am calm. I am neither trifling, nor do I wish to be trifled with. (The laughter of the company suppressed, and with ludicrous attempts at gravity.) There is a picture in the room in which I was put last night, that has had an effect upon me the most singular and incomprehensible."

"A picture?" said the old gentleman with the haunted head. "A picture!" cried the narrator with the nose. "A picture! a picture!" echoed several voices. Here there was an ungovernable peal of laughter. I could not contain myself. I started up from my seat; looked round on the company with fiery indignation; thrust both of my hands into my pockets, and strode up to one of the windows as though I would have walked through it. I stopped short, looked out upon the landscape without distinguishing a feature of it, and felt my gorge rising almost to suffocation.

Mine host saw it was time to interfere. He had maintained an air of gravity through the whole of the scene; and now stepped forth, as if to shelter me from the overwhelming merriment of my companions.

"Gentlemen," said he, "I dislike to spoil sport, but you have had your laugh, and the joke of the haunted chamber has been enjoyed. I must now take the part of my guest. I must not only vindicate him from your pleasantries, but I must reconcile him to himself, for I suspect he is a little out of humour with his own feelings; and, above all, I must crave his pardon for having made him the subject of a kind of experiment. Yes, gentlemen, there is something strange and peculiar in the chamber to which our friend was shown last night; there is a picture in my house,

which possesses a singular and mysterious influence, and with which there is connected a very curious story. It is a picture to which I attach a value from a variety of circumstances; and though I have often been tempted to destroy it, from the odd and uncomfortable sensations which it produces in every one that beholds it, yet I have never been able to prevail upon myself to make the sacrifice. It is a picture I never like to look upon myself, and which is held in awe by all my servants. I have therefore banished it to a room but rarely used, and should have had it covered last night, had not the nature of our conversation, and the whimsical talk about a haunted chamber, tempted me to let it remain, by way of experiment, to see whether a stranger, totally unacquainted with its story, would be affected by it."

The words of the Baronet had turned every thought into a different channel. All were anxious to hear the story of the mysterious picture; and, for myself, so strangely were my feelings interested, that I forgot to feel piqued at the experiment which my host had made upon my nerves, and joined eagerly in the general entreaty. As the morning was stormy, and denied all egress, my host was glad of any means of entertaining his company; so, drawing his arm-chair towards the fire, he began.—

THE ADVENTURE OF THE MYSTERIOUS STRANGER.

Many years since, when I was a young man, and had just left Oxford, I was sent on the grand tour to finish my education. I believe my parents had tried in vain to inoculate me with wisdom; so they sent me to mingle with society, in hopes that I might take it the natural way. Such, at least, appears the reason for which nine-tenths of our youngsters are sent abroad. In the course of my tour I remained some time at Venice. The romantic character of that place delighted me; I was very much amused by the air of adventure and intrigue prevalent in this region of masks and gondolas; and I was exceedingly smitten by a pair of languishing black eyes, that played upon my heart from under an Italian mantle; so I persuaded myself that I was lingering at Venice to study men and manners; at least I persuaded my friends so, and that answered all my purposes.

I was a little prone to be struck by peculiarities in character and conduct, and my imagination was so full of romantic associations with Italy, that I was always on the look out for adventure. Every thing chimed in with such a humour in this old mermaid of a city. My suit of apartments were in a proud, melancholy palace on the grand canal, formerly the residence of a magnifico, and sumptuous with the traces of decayed grandeur. My gondolier was one of the shrewdest of his class, active, merry, intelligent, and, like his brethren, secret as the grave; that is to say, secret to all the world except his master. I had not had him a week

before he put me behind all the curtains in Venice. I liked the silence and mystery of the place, and when I sometimes saw from my window a black gondola gliding mysteriously along in the dusk of the evening, with nothing visible but its little glimmering lantern, I would jump into my own zendeletta, and give a signal for pursuit—"But I am running away from my subject with the recollection of youthful follies," said the Baronet, checking himself. "Let us come to the point."

Among my familiar resorts was a cassino under the arcades on one side of the grand square of St. Mark. Here I used frequently to lounge and take my ice, on these warm summer nights, when in Italy every body lives abroad until morning. I was seated here one evening, when a group of Italians took their seat at a table on the opposite side of the saloon. Their conversation was gay and animated, and carried on with Italian vivacity and gesticulation. I remarked among them one young man, however, who appeared to take no share, and find no enjoyment in the conversation, though he seemed to force himself to attend to it. He was tall and slender, and of extremely prepossessing appearance. His features were fine, though emaciated. He had a profusion of black glossy hair, that curled lightly about his head, and contrasted with the extreme paleness of his countenance. His brow was haggard; deep furrows seemed to have been ploughed into his visage by care, not by age, for he was evidently in the prime of youth. His eye was full of expression and fire, but wild and unsteady. He seemed to be tormented by some strange fancy or apprehension. In spite of every effort to fix his attention on the conversation of his companions, I noticed that every now and then he would turn his head slowly round, give a glance over his shoulder, and then withdraw it with a sudden jerk, as if something painful met his eye. This was repeated at intervals of about a minute, and he appeared hardly to have recovered from one shock before I saw him slowly preparing to encounter another.

After sitting some time in the cassino, the party paid for the refreshment they had taken, and departed. The young man was the last to leave the saloon, and I remarked him glancing behind him in the same way, just as he passed out of the door. I could not resist the impulse to rise and follow him; for I was at an age when a romantic feeling of curiosity is easily awakened. The party walked slowly down the arcades, talking and laughing as they went. They crossed the Piazetta, but paused in the middle of it to enjoy the scene. It was one of those moonlight nights, so brilliant and clear in the pure atmosphere of Italy. The moonbeams streamed on the tall tower of St. Mark, and lighted up the magnificent front and swelling domes of the cathedral. The party expressed their delight in animated terms. I kept my eye upon the young man. He alone seemed abstracted and self-occupied. I noticed the same singular and, as it were, furtive glance over the shoulder, which

had attracted my attention in the cassino. The party moved on, and I followed; they passed along the walk called the Broglio, turned the corner of the Ducal Palace, and getting into a gondola, glided swiftly away.

The countenance and conduct of this young man dwelt upon my mind, and interested me exceedingly. I met him a day or two afterwards in a gallery of paintings. He was evidently a connoisseur, for he always singled out the most masterly productions, and the few remarks drawn from him by his companions showed an intimate acquaintance with the art. His own taste, however, ran on singular extremes. On Salvator Rosa, in his most savage and solitary scenes; on Raphael, Titian, and Correggio, in their softest delineations of female beauty; on these he would occasionally gaze with transient enthusiasm. But this seemed only a momentary forgetfulness. Still would recur that cautious glance behind, and always quickly withdrawn, as though something terrible met his view.

I encountered him frequently afterwards at the theatre, at balls, at concerts; at the promenades in the gardens of San Georgia; at the grotesque exhibitions in the square of St. Mark; among the throng of merchants on the exchange by the Rialto. He seemed, in fact, to seek crowds; to hunt after bustle and amusement; yet never to take any interest in either the business or the gaiety of the scene. Ever an air of painful thought, of wretched abstraction; and ever that strange and recurring movement of glancing fearfully over the shoulder. I did not know at first but this might be caused by apprehension of arrest; or, perhaps, from dread of assassination. But if so, why should he go thus continually abroad; why expose himself at all times and in all places?

I became anxious to know this stranger. I was drawn to him by that romantic sympathy which sometimes draws young men towards each other. His melancholy threw a charm about him, no doubt heightened by the touching expression of his countenance, and the manly graces of his person; for manly beauty has its effect even upon men. I had an Englishman's habitual diffidence and awkwardness to contend with; but from frequently meeting him in the cassinos, I gradually edged myself into his acquaintance. I had no reserve on his part to contend with. He seemed, on the contrary, to court society; and, in fact, to seek anything rather than be alone.

When he found that I really took an interest in him, he threw himself entirely on my friendship. He clung to me like a drowning man. He would walk with me for hours up and down the place of St. Mark—or would sit, until the night was far advanced, in my apartments. He took rooms under the same roof with me; and his constant request was that I would permit him, when it did not incommode me, to sit by me in my saloon. It was not that he seemed to take a particular delight in my conversation, but rather that he craved the vicinity of a human being; and, above all, of

a being that sympathised with him. "I have often heard," said he, "of the sincerity of Englishmen—thank God I have one at length for a friend!"

Yet he never seemed disposed to avail himself of my sympathy other than by mere companionship. He never sought to unbosom himself to me: there appeared to be a settled corroding anguish in his bosom that neither could be soothed "by silence nor by speaking."

A devouring melancholy preyed upon his heart, and seemed to be drying up the very blood in his veins. It was not a soft melancholy, the disease of the affections, but a parching, withering agony. I could see at times that his mouth was dry and feverish; he panted rather than breathed; his eyes were bloodshot; his cheeks pale and livid; with now and then faint streaks of red athwart them, baleful gleams of the fire that was consuming his heart. As my arm was within his, I felt him press it at times with a convulsive motion to his side; his hands would clinch themselves involuntarily, and a kind of shudder would run through his frame.

I reasoned with him about his melancholy, sought to draw from him the cause; he shrunk from all confiding: "Do not seek to know it," said he, "you could not relieve it if you knew it; you would not even seek to relieve it. On the contrary, I should lose your sympathy, and that," said he, pressing my hand convulsively, "that I feel has become too dear to me to risk."

I endeavoured to awaken hope within him. He was young; life had a thousand pleasures in store for him; there was a healthy reaction in the youthful heart; it medicines all its own wounds—"Come, come," said I, "there is no grief so great that youth cannot outgrow it."—"No! no!" said he, clinching his teeth, and striking repeatedly, with the energy of despair, on his bosom—"it is here! here! deep rooted; draining my heart's blood. It grows and grows, while my heart withers and withers. I have a dreadful monitor that gives me no repose—that follows me step by step—and will follow me step by step, until it pushes me into my grave!"

As he said this, he involuntarily gave me one of those fearful glances over his shoulder, and shrunk back with more than usual horror. I could not resist the temptation to allude to this movement, which I supposed to be some mere malady of the nerves. The moment I mentioned it, his face became crimsoned and convulsed; he grasped me by both hands—

"For God's sake," exclaimed he, with a piercing voice, "never allude to that again.—Let us avoid this subject, my friend; you cannot relieve me, indeed you cannot relieve me, but you may add to the torments I suffer.—At some future day you shall know all."

I never resumed the subject; for however much my curiosity

might be roused, I felt too true a compassion for his sufferings to increase them by my intrusion. I sought various ways to divert his mind, and to arouse him from the constant meditations in which he was plunged. He saw my efforts, and seconded them as far as in his power, for there was nothing moody or wayward in his nature. On the contrary, there was something frank, generous, unassuming in his whole deportment. All the sentiments he uttered were noble and lofty. He claimed no indulgence, asked no toleration, but seemed content to carry his load of misery in silence, and only sought to carry it by my side. There was a mute beseeching manner about him, as if he craved companionship as a charitable boon; and a tacit thankfulness in his looks, as if he felt grateful to me for not repulsing him.

I felt this melancholy to be infectious. It stole over my spirits; interfered with all my gay pursuits, and gradually saddened my life; yet I could not prevail upon myself to shake off a being who seemed to hang upon me for support. In truth, the generous traits of character which beamed through all his gloom penetrated to my heart. His bounty was lavish and open-handed: his charity melting and spontaneous; not confined to mere donations, which humiliate as much as they relieve. The tone of his voice, the beam of his eye, enhanced every gift, and surprised the poor suppliant with that rarest and sweetest of charities, the charity not merely of the hand, but of the heart. Indeed his liberality seemed to have something in it of self-abasement and expiation. He, in a manner, humbled himself before the mendicant. "What right have I to ease and affluence"—would he murmur to himself—"when innocence wanders in misery and rags?"

The carnival time arrived. I hoped the gay scenes then presented might have some cheering effect. I mingled with him in the motley throng that crowded the place of St. Mark. We frequented operas, masquerades, balls—all in vain. The evil kept growing on him. He became more and more haggard and agitated. Often, after we have returned from one of these scenes of revelry, I have entered his room and found him lying on his face on the sofa; his hands clinched in his fine hair, and his whole countenance bearing trace of the convulsions of his mind.

The carnival passed away; the time of Lent succeeded; passion week arrived; we attended one evening a solemn service in one of the churches, in the course of which a grand piece of vocal and instrumental music was performed, relating to the death of our Saviour.

I had remarked that he was always powerfully affected by music; on this occasion he was so in an extraordinary degree. As the pealing notes swelled through the lofty aisles, he seemed to kindle with fervour; his eyes rolled upwards, until nothing but the whites were visible; his hands were clasped together, until the fingers were deeply imprinted in the flesh. When the music ex-

pressed the dying agony, his face gradually sank upon his knees; and at the touching words resounding through the church, "*Jesu mori,*" sobs burst from him uncontrolled—I had never seen him weep before. His had always been agony rather than sorrow. I augured well from the circumstance, and let him weep on uninterrupted. When the service was ended, we left the church. He hung on my arm as we walked homewards with something of a softer and more subdued manner, instead of that nervous agitation I had been accustomed to witness. He alluded to the service we had heard. "Music," said he, "is indeed the voice of heaven; never before have I felt more impressed by the story of the atonement of our Saviour.—Yes, my friend," said he, clasping his hands with a kind of transport, "I know that my Redeemer liveth!"

We parted for the night. His room was not far from mine, and I heard him for some time busied in it. I fell asleep, but was awakened before daylight. The young man stood by my bedside, dressed for travelling. He held a sealed packet and a large parcel in his hand, which he laid on the table.

"Farewell, my friend," said he, "I am about to set forth on a long journey; but, before I go, I leave with you these remembrances. In this packet you will find the particulars of my story. —When you read them I shall be far away; do not remember me with aversion.—You have been indeed a friend to me.—You have poured oil into a broken heart, but you could not heal it.— Farewell! let me kiss your hand—I am unworthy to embrace you." He sank on his knees—seized my hand in despite of my efforts to the contrary, and covered it with kisses. I was so surprised by all the scene, that I had not been able to say a word.— "But we shall meet again," said I hastily, as I saw him hurrying towards the door. "Never, never, in this world!" said he, solemnly.—He sprang once more to my bedside—seized my hand, pressed it to his heart and to his lips, and rushed out of the room.

Here the Baronet paused. He seemed lost in thought, and sat looking upon the floor, and drumming with his fingers on the arm of his chair.

"And did this mysterious personage return?" said the inquisitive gentleman.

"Never!" replied the Baronet, with a pensive shake of the head—"I never saw him again."

"And pray what has all this to do with the picture?" inquired the old gentleman with the nose.

"True," said the questioner—"is it the portrait of that crack-brained Italian?"

"No," said the Baronet, dryly, not half liking the appellation given to his hero—"but this picture was enclosed in the parcel he left with me. The sealed packet contained its explanation. There was a request on the outside that I would not open it until six months had elapsed. I kept my promise in spite of my

curiosity. I have a translation of it by me, and had meant to read it, by way of accounting for the mystery of the chamber; but I fear I have already detained the company too long."

Here there was a general wish expressed to have the manuscript read, particularly on the part of the inquisitive gentleman; so the worthy Baronet drew out a fairly-written manuscript, and, wiping his spectacles, read aloud the following story.—

THE STORY OF THE YOUNG ITALIAN.

I was born at Naples. My parents, though of noble rank, were limited in fortune, or rather, my father was ostentatious beyond his means, and expended so much on his palace, his equipage, and his retinue, that he was continually straitened in his pecuniary circumstances. I was a younger son, and looked upon with indifference by my father, who, from a principle of family pride, wished to leave all his property to my elder brother. I showed, when quite a child, an extreme sensibility. Everything affected me violently. While yet an infant in my mother's arms, and before I had learnt to talk, I could be wrought upon to a wonderful degree of anguish or delight by the power of music. As I grew older, my feelings remained equally acute, and I was easily transported into paroxysms of pleasure or rage. It was the amusement of my relations and of the domestics to play upon this irritable temperament. I was moved to tears, tickled to laughter, provoked to fury, for the entertainment of company, who were amused by such a tempest of mighty passion in a pigmy frame—they little thought, or perhaps little heeded the dangerous sensibilities they were fostering. I thus became a little creature of passion before reason was developed. In a short time I grew too old to be a plaything, and then I became a torment. The tricks and passions I had been teased into became irksome, and I was disliked by my teachers for the very lessons they had taught me. My mother died; and my power as a spoiled child was at an end. There was no longer any necessity to humour or tolerate me, for there was nothing to be gained by it, as I was no favourite of my father. I therefore experienced the fate of a spoiled child in such a situation, and was neglected, or noticed only to be crossed and contradicted. Such was the early treatment of a heart, which, if I can judge of it at all, was naturally disposed to the extremes of tenderness and affection.

My father, as I have already said, never liked me—in fact, he never understood me; he looked upon me as wilful and wayward, as deficient in natural affection.—It was the stateliness of his own manner, the loftiness and grandeur of his own look, which had repelled me from his arms. I always pictured him to myself as I had seen him, clad in his senatorial robes, rustling with pomp and pride. The magnificence of his person daunted my young imagination. I could never approach him with the confiding affection of a child.

My father's feelings were wrapped up in my elder brother. He was to be the inheritor of the family title and the family dignity, and everything was sacrificed to him—I, as well as everything else. It was determined to devote me to the church, that so my humours and myself might be removed out of the way, either of tasking my father's time and trouble, or interfering with the interests of my brother. At an early age, therefore, before my mind had dawned upon the world and its delights, or known any thing of it beyond the precincts of my father's palace, I was sent to a convent, the superior of which was my uncle, and was confided entirely to his care.

My uncle was a man totally estranged from the world: he had never relished, for he had never tasted its pleasures; and he regarded rigid self-denial as the great basis of Christian virtue. He considered every one's temperament like his own: or at least he made them conform to it. His character and habits had an influence over the fraternity of which he was superior—a more gloomy, saturnine set of beings were never assembled together. The convent, too, was calculated to awaken sad and solitary thoughts. It was situated in a gloomy gorge of those mountains away south of Vesuvius. All distant views were shut out by sterile volcanic heights. A mountain-stream raved beneath its walls, and eagles screamed about its turrets.

I had been sent to this place at so tender an age as soon to lose all distinct recollection of the scenes I had left behind. As my mind expanded, therefore, it formed its idea of the world from the convent, and its vicinity, and a dreary world it appeared to me. An early tinge of melancholy was thus infused into my character; and the dismal stories of the monks about devils and evil spirits, with which they affrighted my young imagination, gave me a tendency to superstition which I could never effectually shake off. They took the same delight to work upon my ardent feelings, that had been so mischievously executed by my father's household. I can recollect the horrors with which they fed my heated fancy during an eruption of Vesuvius. We were distant from that volcano, with mountains between us; but its convulsive throes shook the solid foundations of nature. Earthquakes threatened to topple down our convent towers. A lurid baleful light hung in the heavens at night, and showers of ashes, borne by the wind, fell in our narrow valley. The monks talked of the earth being honey-combed beneath us; of streams of molten lava raging through its veins; of caverns of sulphurous flames roaring in the centre, the abodes of demons and the damned; of fiery gulfs ready to yawn beneath our feet. All these tales were told to the doleful accompaniment of the mountain's thunders, whose low bellowing made the walls of our convent vibrate.

One of the monks had been a painter, but had retired from the world, and embraced this dismal life in expiation of some crime. He was a melancholy man, who pursued his art in the solitude of

his cell, but made it a source of penance to him. His employment was to portray, either on canvas or in waxen models, the human face, and human form, in the agonies of death, and in all stages of dissolution and decay. The fearful mysteries of the charnel-house were unfolded in his labours; the loathsome banquet of the beetle and the worm. I turn with shuddering even from the recollection of his works, yet, at the time, my strong but ill-directed imagination seized with ardour upon his instructions in his art. Anything was a variety from the dry studies and monotonous duties of the cloister. In a little while I became expert with my pencil, and my gloomy productions were thought worthy of decorating some of the altars of the chapel.

In this dismal way was a creature of feeling and fancy brought up. Everything genial and amiable in my nature was repressed, and nothing brought out but what was unprofitable and ungracious. I was ardent in my temperament; quick, mercurial, impetuous, formed to be a creature all love and adoration; but a leaden hand was laid on all my finer qualities. I was taught nothing but fear and hatred. I hated my uncle. I hated the monks, I hated the convent in which I was immured. I hated the world; and I almost hated myself for being, as I supposed, so hating and hateful an animal.

When I had nearly attained the age of sixteen, I was suffered, on one occasion, to accompany one of the brethren on a mission to a distant part of the country. We soon left behind us the gloomy valley in which I had been pent up for so many years, and after a short journey among the mountains, emerged upon the voluptuous landscape that spreads itself about the Bay of Naples! Heavens! how transported was I, when I stretched my gaze over a vast reach of delicious sunny country, gay with groves and vineyards; with Vesuvius rearing its forked summit to my right; the blue Mediterranean to my left, with its enchanting coast, studded with shining towns and sumptuous villas! and Naples, my native Naples, gleaming far, far in the distance.

Good God! was this the lovely world from which I had been excluded! I had reached that age when the sensibilities are in all their bloom and freshness. Mine had been checked and chilled. They now burst forth with the suddenness of a retarded springtime. My heart, hitherto unnaturally shrunk up, expanded into a riot of vague but delicious emotions. The beauty of nature intoxicated—bewildered me. The song of the peasants; their cheerful looks; their happy avocations; the picturesque gaiety of their dresses; their rustic music; their dances; all broke upon me like witchcraft. My soul responded to the music, my heart danced in my bosom. All the men appeared amiable, all the women lovely.

I returned to the convent, that is to say, my body returned, but my heart and soul never entered there again. I could not forget this glimpse of a beautiful and a happy world—a world so suited

to my natural character. I had felt so happy while in it; so different a being from what I felt myself when in the convent—that tomb of the living. I contrasted the countenances of the beings I had seen, full of fire and freshness and enjoyment, with the pallid, leaden, lack-lustre visages of the monks; the dance with the droning chant of the chapel. I had before found the exercises of the cloister wearisome, they now became intolerable. The dull round of duties wore away my spirit; my nerves became irritated by the fretful tinkling of the convent-bell, evermore dinging among the mountain echoes, evermore calling me from my repose at night, my pencil by day, to attend to some tedious and mechanical ceremony of devotion.

I was not of a nature to meditate long without putting my thoughts into action. My spirit had been suddenly aroused, and was now all awake within me. I watched an opportunity, fled from the convent, and made my way on foot to Naples. As I entered its gay and crowded streets, and beheld the variety and stir of life around me, the luxury of palaces, the splendour of equipages, and the pantomimic animation of the motley populace, I seemed as if awakened to a world of enchantment, and solemnly vowed that nothing should force me back to the monotony of the cloister.

I had to inquire the way to my father's palace, for I had been so young on leaving it that I knew not its situation. I found some difficulty in getting admitted to my father's presence; for the domestics scarcely knew that there was such a being as myself in existence, and my monastic dress did not operate in my favour. Even my father entertained no recollection of my person. I told him my name, threw myself at his feet, implored his forgiveness, and entreated that I might not be sent back to the convent.

He received me with the condescension of a patron, rather than the fondness of a parent; listened patiently, but coldly, to my tale of monastic grievances and disgusts, and promised to think what else could be done for me. This coldness blighted and drove back all the frank affection of my nature, that was ready to spring forth at the least warmth of parental kindness. All my early feelings towards my father revived. I again looked up to him as the stately magnificent being that had daunted my childish imagination, and felt as if I had no pretensions to his sympathies. My brother engrossed all his care and love; he inherited his nature, and carried himself towards me with a protecting rather than a fraternal air. It wounded my pride, which was great. I could brook condescension from my father, for I looked up to him with awe, as a superior being; but I could not brook patronage from a brother, who I felt was intellectually my inferior. The servants perceived that I was an unwelcome intruder in the paternal mansion, and, menial-like, they treated me with neglect. Thus baffled at every point, my affections outraged wherever they would attach themselves, I became sullen, silent, and desponding. My feelings,

driven back upon myself, entered and preyed upon my own heart. I remained for some days an unwelcome guest rather than a restored son in my father's house. I was doomed never to be properly known there. I was made, by wrong treatment, strange even to myself, and they judged of me from my strangeness.

I was startled one day at the sight of one of the monks of my convent gliding out of my father's room. He saw me, but pretended not to notice me, and this very hypocrisy made me suspect something. I had become sore and susceptible in my feelings, every thing inflicted a wound on them. In this state of mind, I was treated with marked disrespect by a pampered minion, the favourite servant of my father. All the pride and passion of my nature rose in an instant, and I struck him to the earth. My father was passing by; he stopped not to inquire the reason, nor indeed could he read the long course of mental sufferings which were the real cause. He rebuked me with anger and scorn; summoning all the haughtiness of his nature and grandeur of his look to give weight to the contumely with which he treated me. I felt that I had not deserved it. I felt that I was not appreciated. I felt that I had that within me which merited better treatment. My heart swelled against my father's injustice. I broke through my habitual awe of him—I replied to him with impatience. My hot spirit flushed in my cheek and kindled in my eye; but my sensitive heart swelled as quickly, and before I had half vented my passion, I felt it suffocated and quenched in my tears. My father was astonished and incensed at this turning of the worm, and ordered me to my chamber. I retired in silence, choking with contending emotions.

I had not been long there when I overheard voices in an adjoining apartment. It was a consultation between my father and the monk, about the means of getting me back quietly to the convent. My resolution was taken. I had no longer a home nor a father. That very night I left the paternal roof. I got on board a vessel about making sail from the harbour, and abandoned myself to the wide world. No matter to what port she steered; any part of so beautiful a world was better than my convent. No matter where I was cast by fortune; any place would be more a home to me than the home I had left behind. The vessel was bound to Genoa. We arrived there after a voyage of a few days.

As I entered the harbour between the moles which embrace it, and beheld the amphitheatre of palaces, and churches, and splendid gardens, rising one above another, I felt at once its title to the appellation of Genoa the Superb. I landed on the mole an utter stranger, without knowing what to do, or whither to direct my steps. No matter: I was released from the thraldom of the convent and the humiliations of home. When I traversed the Strada Balbi and the Strada Nuova, those streets of palaces, and gazed at the wonders of architecture around me; when I

wandered at close of day amid a gay throng of the brilliant and the beautiful, through the green alleys of the Aqua Verde, or among the colonnades and terraces of the magnificent Doria gardens; I thought it impossible to be ever otherwise than happy in Genoa.

A few days sufficed to show me my mistake. My scanty purse was exhausted, and for the first time in my life I experienced the sordid distress of penury. I had never known the want of money, and had never adverted to the possibility of such an evil. I was ignorant of the world and all its ways; and when first the idea of destitution came over my mind, its effect was withering. I was wandering penniless through the streets which no longer delighted my eyes, when chance led my steps into the magnificent church of the Annunciata.

A celebrated painter of the day was at that moment superintending the placing of one of his pictures over an altar. The proficiency which I had acquired in his art during my residence in the convent, had made me an enthusiastic amateur. I was struck, at the first glance, with the painting. It was the face of a Madonna. So innocent, so lovely, such a divine expression of maternal tenderness! I lost, for the moment, all recollection of myself in the enthusiasm of my art. I clasped my hands together, and uttered an ejaculation of delight. The painter perceived my emotion. He was flattered and gratified by it. My air and manner pleased him, and he accosted me. I felt too much the want of friendship to repel the advances of a stranger; and there was something in this one so benevolent and winning, that in a moment he gained my confidence.

I told him my story and my situation, concealing only my name and rank. He appeared strongly interested by my recital, invited me to his house, and from that time I became his favourite pupil. He thought he perceived in me extraordinary talents for the art, and his encomiums awakened all my ardour. What a blissful period of my existence was it that I passed beneath his roof! Another being seemed created within me; or rather, all that was amiable and excellent was drawn out. I was as recluse as ever I had been at the convent, but how different was my seclusion! My time was spent in storing my mind with lofty and poetical ideas; in meditating on all that was striking and noble in history and fiction; in studying and tracing all that was sublime and beautiful in nature. I was always a visionary, imaginative being, but now my reveries and imaginings all elevated me to rapture. I looked up to my master as to a benevolent genius that had opened to me a region of enchantment. He was not a native of Genoa, but had been drawn thither by the solicitations of several of the nobility, and had resided there but a few years, for the completion of certain works. His health was delicate, and he had to confide much of the filling up of his designs to the pencils

of his scholars. He considered me particularly happy in delineating the human countenance; in seizing upon characteristic though fleeting expressions, and fixing them powerfully upon my canvas. I was employed continually, therefore, in sketching faces, and often, when some particular grace or beauty of expression was wanted in a countenance, it was intrusted to my pencil. My benefactor was fond of bringing me forward; and partly, perhaps, through my actual skill, and partly through his partial praises, I began to be noted for the expressions of my countenances.

Among the various works which he had undertaken, was an historical piece for one of the palaces of Genoa, in which were to be introduced the likenesses of several of the family. Among these was one entrusted to my pencil. It was that of a young girl, as yet in a convent for her education. She came out for the purpose of sitting for the picture. I first saw her in an apartment of one of the sumptuous palaces of Genoa. She stood before a casement that looked out upon the bay; a stream of vernal sunshine fell upon her, and shed a kind of glory round her, as it lit up the rich crimson chamber. She was but sixteen years of age—and oh, how lovely! The scene broke upon me like a mere vision of spring and youth and beauty. I could have fallen down and worshipped her. She was like one of those fictions of poets and painters, when they would express the *beau ideal* that haunts their minds with shapes of indescribable perfection. I was permitted to sketch her countenance in various positions, and I fondly protracted the study that was undoing me. The more I gazed on her, the more I became enamoured; there was something almost painful in my intense admiration. I was but nineteen years of age, shy, diffident, and inexperienced. I was treated with attention by her mother; for my youth and my enthusiasm in my art had won favour for me; and I am inclined to think something in my air and manner inspired interest and respect. Still the kindness with which I was treated could not dispel the embarrassment into which my own imagination threw me when in presence of this lovely being. It elevated her into something almost more than mortal. She seemed too exquisite for earthly use; too delicate and exalted for human attainment. As I sat tracing her charms on my canvas, with my eyes occasionally riveted on her features, I drank in delicious poison that made me giddy. My heart alternately gushed with tenderness, and ached with despair. Now I became more than ever sensible of the violent fires that had lain dormant at the bottom of my soul. You who are born in a more temperate climate, and under a cooler sky, have little idea of the violence of passion in our southern bosoms.

A few days finished my task. Bianca returned to her convent, but her image remained indelibly impressed upon my heart. It dwelt in my imagination; it became my pervading idea of beauty. It had an effect even upon my pencil. I became noted for my

felicity in depicting female loveliness: it was but because I multiplied the image of Bianca. I soothed and yet fed my fancy by introducing her in all the productions of my master. I have stood, with delight, in one of the chapels of the Annunciata, and heard the crowd extol the seraphic beauty of a saint which I had painted. I have seen them bow down in adoration before the painting; they were bowing before the loveliness of Bianca.

I existed in this kind of dream, I might almost say delirium, for upwards of a year. Such is the tenacity of my imagination, that the image formed in it continued in all its power and freshness. Indeed, I was a solitary, meditative being, much given to reverie, and apt to foster ideas which had once taken strong possession of me. I was roused from this fond, melancholy, delicious dream by the death of my worthy benefactor. I cannot describe the pangs his death occasioned me. It left me alone, and almost broken-hearted. He bequeathed to me his little property, which, from the liberality of his disposition, and his expensive style of living, was indeed but small; and he most particularly recommended me in dying, to the protection of a nobleman who had been his patron.

The latter was a man who passed for munificent. He was a lover and an encourager of the arts, and evidently wished to be thought so. He fancied he saw in me indications of future excellence; my pencil had already attracted attention; he took me at once under his protection. Seeing that I was overwhelmed with grief, and incapable of exerting myself in the mansion of my late benefactor, he invited me to sojourn for a time at a villa which he possessed on the border of the sea, in the picturesque neighbourhood of Sestri di Ponente.

I found at the villa the count's only son, Filippo. He was nearly of my age; prepossessing in his appearance, and fascinating in his manners; he attached himself to me, and seemed to court my good opinion. I thought there was something of profession in his kindness, and of caprice in his disposition; but I had nothing else near me to attach myself to, and my heart felt the need of something to repose upon. His education had been neglected; he looked upon me as his superior in mental powers and acquirements, and tacitly acknowledged my superiority. I felt that I was his equal in birth, and that gave independence to my manners, which had its effect. The caprice and tyranny I saw sometimes exercised on others, over whom he had power, were never manifested towards me. We became intimate friends and frequent companions. Still I loved to be alone, and to indulge in the reveries of my own imagination among the scenery by which I was surrounded.

The villa commanded a wide view of the Mediterranean, and of the picturesque Ligurian coast. It stood alone in the midst of ornamented grounds, finely decorated with statues and fountains,

and laid out into groves and alleys and shady lawns. Everything was assembled here that could gratify the taste, or agreeably occupy the mind. Soothed by the tranquillity of this elegant retreat, the turbulence of my feelings gradually subsided, and blending with the romantic spell which still reigned over my imagination, produced a soft, voluptuous melancholy.

I had not been long under the roof of the count, when our solitude was enlivened by another inhabitant. It was a daughter of a relative of the count, who had lately died in reduced circumstances, bequeathing this only child to his protection. I had heard much of her beauty from Filippo, but my fancy had become so engrossed by one idea of beauty, as not to admit of any other. We were in the central saloon of the villa when she arrived. She was still in mourning, and approached, leaning on the count's arm. As they ascended the marble portico, I was struck by the elegance of her figure and movement, by the grace with which the *mezzaro*, the bewitching vail of Genoa, was folded about her slender form. They entered. Heavens! what was my surprise when I beheld Bianca before me! It was herself; pale with grief, but still more matured in loveliness than when I had last beheld her. The time that had elapsed had developed the graces of her person, and the sorrow she had undergone had diffused over her countenance an irresistible tenderness.

She blushed and trembled at seeing me, and tears rushed into her eyes, for she remembered in whose company she had been accustomed to behold me. For my part, I cannot express what were my emotions. By degrees I overcame the extreme shyness that had formerly paralyzed me in her presence. We were drawn together by sympathy of situation. We had each lost our best friend in the world; we were each, in some measure, thrown upon the kindness of others. When I came to know her intellectually, all my ideal picturings of her were confirmed. Her newness to the world, her delightful susceptibility to everything beautiful and agreeable in nature, reminded me of my own emotions when first I escaped from the convent. Her rectitude of thinking delighted my judgment; the sweetness of her nature wrapped itself round my heart; and then her young, and tender and budding loveliness, sent a delicious madness to my brain.

I gazed upon her with a kind of idolatry, as something more than mortal; and I felt humiliated at the idea of my comparative unworthiness. Yet she was mortal; and one of mortality's most susceptible and loving compounds;—for she loved me!

How first I discovered the transporting truth I cannot recollect. I believe it stole upon me by degrees as a wonder past hope or belief. We were both at such a tender and loving age; in constant intercourse with each other; mingling in the same elegant pursuits;—for music, poetry, and painting, were our mutual delights; and we were almost separated from society among lovely

and romantic scenery. Is it strange that two young hearts, thus brought together, should readily twine round each other?

Oh, gods! what a dream—a transient dream of unalloyed delight, then passed over my soul! then it was that the world around me was indeed a paradise! for I had woman—lovely, delicious woman, to share it with me! How often have I rambled along the picturesque shores of Sestri, or climbed its wild mountains, with the coast gemmed with villas, and the blue sea far below me, and the slender Faro of Genoa on its romantic promontory in the distance; and as I sustained the faltering steps of Bianca, have thought there could no unhappiness enter into so beautiful a world! How often have we listened together to the nightingale, as it poured forth its rich notes among the moonlight bowers of the garden, and have wondered that poets could ever have fancied anything melancholy in its song! Why, oh! why is this budding season of life and tenderness so transient! why is this rosy cloud of love, that sheds such a glow over the morning of our days, so prone to brew up into the whirlwind and the storm!

I was the first to awaken from this blissful delirium of the affections. I had gained Bianca's heart, what was I to do with it? I had no wealth nor prospect to entitle me to her hand; was I to take advantage of her ignorance of the world, of her confiding affection, and draw her down to my own poverty? Was this requiting the hospitality of the Count? was this requiting the love of Bianca?

Now first I began to feel that even successful love may have its bitterness. A corroding care gathered about my heart. I moved about the palace like a guilty being. I felt as if I had abused its hospitality, as if I were a thief within its walls. I could no longer look with unembarrassed mien in the countenance of the count. I accused myself of perfidy to him, and I thought he read it in my looks, and began to distrust and despise me. His manner had always been ostentatious and condescending; it now appeared cold and haughty. Filippo, too, became reserved and distant; or, at least, I suspected him to be so. Heavens! was this the mere coinage of my brain? Was I to become suspicious of all the world? A poor surmising wretch; watching looks and gestures; and torturing myself with misconstructions? Or, if true, was I to remain beneath a roof where I was merely tolerated, and linger there on sufferance? "This is not to be endured!" exclaimed I; "I will tear myself from this state of self-abasement; I will break through this fascination, and fly—fly!—whither? from the world? for where is the world when I leave Bianca behind me?"

My spirit was naturally proud, and swelled within me at the idea of being looked upon with contumely. Many times I was on the point of declaring my family and rank, and asserting my equality in the presence of Bianca, when I thought her relations assumed an air of superiority. But the feeling was transient. I considered myself discarded and condemned by my family; and had solemnly

vowed never to own relationship to them until they themselves should claim it.

The struggle of my mind preyed upon my happiness and my health. It seemed as if the uncertainty of being loved would be less intolerable than thus to be assured of it, and yet not dare to enjoy the conviction. I was no longer the enraptured admirer of Bianca; I no longer hung in ecstasy on the tones of her voice, nor drank in with insatiate gaze the beauty of her countenance. Her very smiles ceased to delight me, for I felt culpable in having won them.

She could not but be sensible of the change in me, and inquired the cause with her usual frankness and simplicity. I could not evade the inquiry, for my heart was full to aching. I told her all the conflict of my soul; my devouring passion, my bitter self-upbraiding. "Yes," said I, "I am unworthy of you. I am an offcast from my family—a wanderer—a nameless, homeless wanderer—with nothing but poverty for my portion; and yet I have dared to love you—have dared to aspire to your love."

My agitation moved her to tears, but she saw nothing in my situation so hopeless as I had depicted it. Brought up in a convent, she knew nothing of the world—its wants—its cares: and indeed what woman is a worldly casuist in matters of the heart? Nay more, she kindled into a sweet enthusiasm when she spoke of my fortunes and myself. We had dwelt together on the works of the famous masters. I had related to her their histories; the high reputation, the influence, the magnificence to which they had attained. The companions of princes, the favourites of kings, the pride and boast of nations. All this she applied to me. Her love saw nothing in all their great productions that I was not able to achieve; and when I beheld the lovely creature glow with fervour, and her whole countenance radiant with visions of my glory, I was snatched up for the moment into the heaven of her own imagination.

I am dwelling too long upon this part of my story; yet I cannot help lingering over a period of my life, on which, with all its cares and conflicts, I look back with fondness, for as yet my soul was unstained by a crime. I do not know what might have been the result of this struggle between pride, delicacy, and passion, had I not read in a Neapolitan gazette, an account of the sudden death of my brother. It was accompanied by an earnest inquiry for intelligence concerning me, and a prayer, should this meet my eye, that I would hasten to Naples to comfort an infirm and afflicted father.

I was naturally of an affectionate disposition, but my brother had never been a brother to me. I had long considered myself as disconnected from him, and his death caused me but little emotion. The thoughts of my father, infirm and suffering, touched me however to the quick; and when I thought of him, that lofty, magnificent being, now bowed down and desolate, and suing to me for comfort, all my resentment for past neglect was subdued, and a glow of filial affection was awakened within me.

The predominant feeling, however, that overpowered all others, was transport at the sudden change in my whole fortunes. A home, a name, rank, wealth, awaited me; and love painted a still more rapturous prospect in the distance. I hastened to Bianca, and threw myself at her feet. "Oh, Bianca!" exclaimed I, "at length I can claim you for my own. I am no longer a nameless adventurer, a neglected, dejected outcast. Look—read—behold the tidings that restore me to my name and to myself!"

I will not dwell on the scene that ensued. Bianca rejoiced in the reverse of my situation, because she saw it lightened my heart of a load of care; for her own part, she had loved me for myself, and had never doubted that my own merits would command both fame and fortune.

I now felt all my native pride buoyant within me. I no longer walked with my eyes bent to the dust; hope elevated them to the skies—my soul was lit up with fresh fires, and beamed from my countenance.

I wished to impart the change in my circumstances to the count; to let him know who and what I was—and to make formal proposals for the hand of Bianca; but he was absent on a distant estate. I opened my whole soul to Filippo. Now first I told him of my passion, of the doubts and fears that had distracted me, and of the tidings that had suddenly dispelled them. He overwhelmed me with congratulations, and with the warmest expressions of sympathy; I embraced him in the fulness of my heart;—I felt compunctions for having suspected him of coldness, and asked him forgiveness for ever having doubted his friendship.

Nothing is so warm and enthusiastic as a sudden expansion of the heart between young men. Filippo entered into our concerns with the most eager interest. He was our confidant and counsellor. It was determined that I should hasten at once to Naples, to re-establish myself in my father's affections, and my paternal home; and the moment the reconciliation was effected, and my father's consent insured, I should return and demand Bianca of the count. Filippo engaged to secure his father's acquiescence; indeed he undertook to watch over our interests, and to be the channel through which we might correspond.

My parting with Bianca was tender—delicious—agonizing. It was in a little pavilion of the garden which had been one of our favourite resorts. How often and often did I return to have one more adieu, to have her look once more on me in speechless emotion; to enjoy once more the rapturous sight of those tears streaming down her lovely cheeks; to seize once more on that delicate hand, the frankly accorded pledge of love, and cover it with tears and kisses! Heavens! there is a delight even in the parting agony of two lovers, worth a thousand tame pleasures of the world. I have her at this moment before my eyes, at the window of the pavilion, putting aside the vines which clustered about the casement, her

form beaming forth in virgin light, her countenance all tears and smiles, sending a thousand and a thousand adieus after me, as hesitating, in a delirium of fondness and agitation, I faltered my way down the avenue.

As the bark bore me out of the harbour of Genoa, how eagerly my eye stretched along the coast of Sestri till it discovered the villa gleaming from among trees at the foot of the mountain. As long as day lasted, I gazed and gazed upon it, till it lessened and lessened to a mere white speck in the distance; and still my intense and fixed gaze discerned it, when all other objects of the coast had blended into indistinct confusion, or were lost in the evening gloom.

On arriving at Naples, I hastened to my paternal home. My heart yearned for the long-withheld blessing of a father's love. As I entered the proud portal of the ancestral palace, my emotions were so great that I could not speak. No one knew me; the servants gazed at me with curiosity and surprise. A few years of intellectual elevation and development had made a prodigious change in the poor fugitive stripling from the convent. Still, that no one should know me in my rightful home was overpowering. I felt like the prodigal son returned. I was a stranger in the house of my father. I burst into tears and wept aloud. When I made myself known, however, all was changed. I, who had once been almost repulsed from its walls, and forced to fly as an exile, was welcomed back with acclamation, with servility. One of the servants hastened to prepare my father for my reception; my eagerness to receive the paternal embrace was so great, that I could not await his return, but hurried after him. What a spectacle met his eyes as I entered the chamber! My father, whom I had left in the pride of vigorous age, whose noble and majestic bearing had so awed my young imagination, was bowed down and withered into decrepitude. A paralysis had ravaged his stately form, and left it a shaking ruin. He sat propped up in his chair, with pale, relaxed visage, and glassy wandering eye. His intellects had evidently shared in the ravages of his frame. The servant was endeavouring to make him comprehend that a visitor was at hand. I tottered up to him, and sank at his feet. All his past coldness and neglect were forgotten in his present sufferings. I remembered only that he was my parent, and that I had deserted him. I clasped his knee: my voice was almost filled with convulsive sobs. "Pardon —pardon! oh! my father!" was all that I could utter. His apprehension seemed slowly to return to him. He gazed at me for some moments with a vague, inquiring look; a convulsive tremor quivered about his lips; he feebly extended a shaking hand; laid it upon my head, and burst into an infantine flow of tears.

From that moment he would scarcely spare me from his sight. I appeared the only object that his heart responded to in the world; all else was as a blank to him. He had almost lost the power of speech, and the reasoning faculty seemed at an end. He was mute

and passive, excepting that fits of childlike weeping would sometimes come over him without any immediate cause. If I left the room at any time, his eye was incessantly fixed on the door till my return, and on my entrance there was another gush of tears.

To talk with him of my concerns, in this ruined state of mind, would have been worse than useless; to have left him for ever so short a time would have been cruel, unnatural. Here then was a new trial for my affections. I wrote to Bianca an account of my return, and of my actual situation, painting in colours vivid, for they were true, the torments I suffered at our being thus separated; for the youthful lover every day of absence is an age of love lost. I inclosed the letter in one to Filippo, who was the channel of our correspondence. I received a reply from him full of friendship and sympathy; from Bianca, full assurance of affection and constancy. Week after week, month after month elapsed, without making any change in my circumstances. The vital flame which had seemed nearly extinct when first I met my father, kept fluttering on without any apparent diminution. I watched him constantly, faithfully, I had almost said patiently. I knew that his death alone would set me free—yet I never at any moment wished it. I felt too glad to be able to make any atonement for past disobedience; and denied as I had been all endearments of relationship in my early days, my heart yearned towards a father, who in his age and helplessness had thrown himself entirely on me for comfort.

My passion for Bianca gained daily more force from absence: by constant meditation it wore itself a deeper and deeper channel. I made no new friends nor acquaintances; sought none of the pleasures of Naples, which my rank and fortune threw open to me. Mine was a heart that confined itself to few objects, but dwelt upon them with the intenser passion. To sit by my father, administer to his wants, and to meditate on Bianca in the silence of his chamber, was my constant habit. Sometimes I amused myself with my pencil, in portraying the image ever present to my imagination. I transferred to canvas every look and smile of hers that dwelt in my heart. I showed them to my father, in hopes of awakening an interest in his bosom for the mere shadow of my love; but he was too far sunk in intellect to take any notice of them. When I received a letter from Bianca, it was a new source of solitary luxury. Her letters, it is true, were less and less frequent, but they were always full of assurances of unabated affection. They breathed not the frank and innocent warmth with which she expressed herself in conversation, but I accounted for it from the embarrassment which inexperienced minds have often to express themselves upon paper. Filippo assured me of her unaltered constancy. They both lamented, in the strongest terms, our continued separation, though they did justice to the filial piety that kept me by my father's side.

Nearly two years elapsed in this protracted exile. To me they

were so many ages. Ardent and impetuous by nature, I scarcely know how I should have supported so long an absence, had I not felt assured that the faith of Bianca was equal to my own. At length my father died. Life went from him almost imperceptibly. I hung over him in mute affliction, and watched the expiring spasms of nature. His last faltering accents whispered repeatedly a blessing on me. Alas! how has it been fulfilled!

When I had paid due honours to his remains, and laid them in the tomb of our ancestors, I arranged briefly my affairs, put them in a posture to be easily at my command from a distance, and embarked once more with a bounding heart for Genoa.

Our voyage was propitious, and oh! what was my rapture, when first, in the dawn of morning, I saw the shadowy summits of the Apennines rising almost like clouds above the horizon! The sweet breath of summer just moved us over the long wavering billows that were rolling us on towards Genoa. By degrees the coast of Sestri rose like a creation of enchantment from the silver bosom of the deep. I beheld the line of villages and palaces studding its borders. My eye reverted to a well-known point, and at length, from the confusion of distant objects, it singled out the villa which contained Bianca. It was a mere speck in the landscape, but glimmering from afar, the polar star of my heart.

Again I gazed at it for a livelong summer's day, but oh! how different the emotions between departure and return. It now kept growing and growing, instead of lessening and lessening on my sight. My heart seemed to dilate with it. I looked at it through a telescope. I gradually defined one feature after another. The balconies of the central saloon where first I met Bianca beneath its roof; the terrace where we so often had passed the delightful summer evenings; the awning which shaded her chamber window; I almost fancied I saw her form beneath it. Could she but know her lover was in the bark whose white sail now gleamed on the sunny bosom of the sea! My fond impatience increased as we neared the coast; the ship seemed to lag lazily over the billows; I could almost have sprang into the sea, and swam to the desired shore.

The shadows of evening gradually shrouded the scene; but the moon arose in all her fulness and beauty, and shed the tender light so dear to lovers, over the romantic coast of Sestri. My soul was bathed in unutterable tenderness. I anticipated the heavenly evenings I should pass in once more wandering with Bianca by the light of that blessed moon.

It was late at night before we entered the harbour. As early next morning as I could get released from the formalities of landing, I threw myself on horseback, and hastened to the villa. As I galloped round the rocky promontory, on which stands the Faro, and saw the coast of Sestri opening upon me, a thousand anxieties and doubts suddenly sprang up in my bosom. There is something fearful in returning to those we love, while yet uncertain what ills or

changes absence may have effected. The turbulence of my agitation shook my very frame. I spurred my horse to redoubled speed; he was covered with foam when we both arrived panting at the gateway that opened to the grounds around the villa. I left my horse at a cottage, and walked through the grounds, that I might regain tranquillity for the approaching interview. I chid myself for having suffered mere doubts and surmises thus suddenly to overcome me; but I was always prone to be carried away by gusts of the feelings.

On entering the garden, every thing bore the same look as when I had left it; and this unchanged aspect of things reassured me. There were the alleys in which I had so often walked with Bianca, as we listened to the song of the nightingale; the same shades under which we had so often sat during the noontide heat. There were the same flowers of which she was fond; and which appeared still to be under the ministry of her hand. Everything looked and breathed of Bianca; hope and joy flushed in my bosom at every step. I passed a little arbour, in which we had often sat and read together—a book and glove lay on the bench. It was Bianca's glove; it was a volume of the Metastasio I had given her. The glove lay in my favourite passage. I clasped them to my heart with rapture. "All is safe!" exclaimed I; "she loves me! she is still my own!"

I bounded lightly along the avenue, down which I had faltered so slowly at my departure. I beheld her favourite pavilion, which had witnessed our parting scene. The window was open, with the same vine clambering about it, precisely as when she waved and wept me an adieu. O how transporting was the contrast in my situation! As I passed near the pavilion, I heard the tones of a female voice: they thrilled through me with an appeal to my heart not to be mistaken. Before I could think, I *felt* they were Bianca's. For an instant I paused, overpowered with agitation. I feared to break so suddenly upon her. I softly ascended the steps of the pavilion. The door was open. I saw Bianca seated at a table; her back was towards me; she was warbling a soft melancholy air, and was occupied in drawing. A glance sufficed to show me that she was copying one of my own paintings. I gazed on her for a moment in a delicious tumult of emotions. She paused in her singing: a heavy sigh, almost a sob followed. I could no longer contain myself. "Bianca!" exclaimed I, in a half-smothered voice. She started at the sound, brushed back the ringlets that hung clustering about her face, darted a glance at me, uttered a piercing shriek, and would have fallen to the earth, had I not caught her in my arms.

"Bianca! my own Bianca!" exclaimed I, folding her to my bosom; my voice stifled in sobs of convulsive joy. She lay in my arms without sense or motion. Alarmed at the effects of my precipitation, I scarce knew what to do. I tried by a thousand endearing words to call her back to consciousness. She slowly

recovered, and half opening her eyes, "Where am I?" murmured she faintly. "Here!" exclaimed I, pressing her to my bosom, "here—close to the heart that adores you—in the arms of your faithful Ottavio!" "Oh no! no! no!" shrieked she, starting into sudden life and terror—"away! away! leave me! leave me!"

She tore herself from my arms; rushed to a corner of the saloon, and covered her face with her hands, as if the very sight of me were baleful. I was thunderstrack. I could not believe my senses. I followed her, trembling, confounded. I endeavoured to take her hand; but she shrank from my very touch with horror.

"Good heavens, Bianca!" exclaimed I, "what is the meaning of this? Is this my reception after so long an absence? Is this the love you professed for me?"

At the mention of love a shuddering ran through her. She turned to me a face wild with anguish: "No more of that—no more of that!" gasped she: "talk not to me of love—I—I—am married!"

I reeled as if I had received a mortal blow—a sickness struck to my very heart. I caught at a window-frame for support. For a moment or two every thing was chaos around me. When I recovered, I beheld Bianca lying on a sofa, her face buried in the pillow, and sobbing convulsively. Indignation for her fickleness for a moment overpowered every other feeling.

"Faithless—perjured!" cried I, striding across the room. But another glance at that beautiful being in distress, checked all my wrath. Anger could not dwell together with her idea in my soul.

"Oh, Bianca!" exclaimed I, in anguish, "could I have dreamt of this? Could I have suspected you would have been false to me?"

She raised her face all streaming with tears, all disordered with emotion, and gave me one appealing look. "False to you!—They told me you were dead!"

"What," said I, "in spite of our constant correspondence?"

She gazed wildly at me: "Correspondence! What correspondence?"

"Have you not repeatedly received and replied to my letters?"

She clasped her hands with solemnity and fervour. "As I hope for mercy—never!"

A horrible surmise shot through my brain. "Who told you I was dead?"

"It was reported that the ship in which you embarked for Naples perished at sea."

"But who told you the report?"

She paused for an instant, and trembled:—"Filippo!"

"May the God of heaven curse him!" cried I, extending my clenched fists aloft.

"O do not curse him, do not curse him!" exclaimed she, "he is—he is—my husband!"

This was all that was wanting to unfold the perfidy that had been practised upon me. My blood boiled like liquid fire in my veins.

I gasped with rage too great for utterance—I remained for a time bewildered by the whirl of horrible thoughts that rushed through my mind. The poor victim of deception before me thought it was with her I was incensed. She faintly murmured forth her exculpation. I will not dwell upon it. I saw in it more than she meant to reveal. I saw with a glance how both of us had been betrayed.

"'Tis well," muttered I to myself, in smothered accents of concentrated fury. "He shall render an account of all this."

Bianca overheard me. New terror flashed in her countenance. "For mercy's sake, do not meet him!—say nothing of what has passed—for my sake, say nothing to him—I only shall be the sufferer!"

A new suspicion darted across my mind.—"What!" exclaimed I, "do you then *fear* him? is he *unkind* to you? Tell me," reiterated I, grasping her hand, and looking her eagerly in the face, "tell me—*dares* he to use you harshly?"

"No! no! no!" cried she, faltering and embarrassed—but the glance at her face had told me volumes. I saw in her pallid and wasted features, in the prompt terror and subdued agony of her eye, a whole history of a mind broken down by tyranny. Great God! and was this beauteous flower snatched from me to be thus trampled upon? The idea roused me to madness. I clenched my teeth and my hands; I foamed at the mouth; every passion seemed to have resolved itself into the fury that like a lava boiled within my heart. Bianca shrunk from me in speechless affright. As I strode by the window, my eye darted down the alley. Fatal moment! I beheld Filippo at a distance! my brain was in delirium—I sprang from the pavilion, and was before him with the quickness of lightning. He saw me as I came rushing upon him—he turned pale, looked wildly to right and left, as if he would have fled, and trembling, drew his sword.

"Wretch!" cried I, "well may you draw your weapon!"

I spoke not another word—I snatched forth a stiletto, put by the sword which trembled in his hand, and buried my poniard in his bosom. He fell with the blow, but my rage was unsated. I sprang upon him with the bloodthirsty feeling of a tiger; redoubled my blows; mangled him in my frenzy, grasped him by the throat, until, with reiterated wounds and strangling convulsions, he expired in my grasp. I remained glaring on the countenance, horrible in death, that seemed to stare back with its protruded eyes upon me. Piercing shrieks roused me from my delirium. I looked round, and beheld Bianca flying distractedly towards us. My brain whirled—I waited not to meet her; but fled from the scene of horror. I fled forth from the garden like another Cain,—a hell within my bosom, and a curse upon my head. I fled without knowing whither, almost without knowing why. My only idea was to get farther and farther from the horrors I had left behind; as if I could throw space between myself and my conscience. I fled to

the Apennines, and wandered for days and days among their savage heights. How I existed, I cannot tell—what rocks and precipices I braved, and how I braved them, I know not. I kept on and on, trying to out-travel the curse that clung to me. Alas! the shrieks of Bianca rung for ever in my ears. The horrible countenance of my victim was for ever before my eyes. The blood of Filippo cried to me from the ground. Rocks, trees and torrents, all resounded with my crime. Then it was I felt how much more insupportable is the anguish of remorse than every other mental pang. Oh! could I but have cast off this crime that festered in my heart—could I but have regained the innocence that reigned in my breast as I entered the garden at Sestri—could I but have restored my victim to life, I felt as if I could look on with transport, even though Bianca were in his arms.

By degrees this frenzied fever of remorse settled into a permanent malady of the mind—into one of the most horrible that ever poor wretch was cursed with. Wherever I went, the countenance of him I had slain appeared to follow me. Whenever I turned my head, I beheld it behind me, hideous with the contortions of the dying moment. I have tried in every way to escape from this horrible phantom, but in vain. I know not whether it be an illusion of the mind, the consequence of my dismal education at the convent, or whether a phantom really sent by Heaven to punish me, but there it ever is, at all times, in all places. Nor has time nor habit had any effect in familiarizing me with its terrors. I have travelled from place to place, plunged into amusements, tried dissipation and distraction of every kind—all, all in vain. I once had recourse to my pencil, as a desperate experiment. I painted an exact resemblance of this phantom face. I placed it before me, in hopes that by constantly contemplating the copy, I might diminish the effect of the original; but I only doubled instead of diminishing the misery. Such is the curse that has clung to my footsteps —that has made my life a burden, but the thought of death terrible. God knows what I have suffered; what days and days, and nights and nights of sleepless torment; what a never-dying worm has preyed upon my heart; what an unquenchable fire has burned within my brain! He knows the wrongs that wrought upon my poor weak nature; that converted the tenderest of affections into the deadliest of fury. He knows best whether a frail erring creature has expiated by long-enduring torture and measureless remorse the crime of a moment of madness. Often—often have I prostrated myself in the dust, and implored that he would give me a sign of his forgiveness, and let me die.———

Thus far had I written some time since. I had meant to leave this record of misery and crime with you, to be read when I should be no more.

My prayer to Heaven has at length been heard. You were witness to my emotions last evening at the church, when the vaulted

temple resounded with the words of atonement and redemption. I heard a voice speaking to me from the midst of the music; I heard it rising above the pealing of the organ, and the voices of the choir. It spoke to me in tones of celestial melody; it promised mercy and forgiveness, but demanded from me full expiation. I go to make it. To-morrow I shall be on my way to Genoa, to surrender myself to justice. You who have pitied my sufferings, who have poured the balm of sympathy into my wounds, do not shrink from my memory with abhorrence now that you know my story. Recollect, that when you read of my crime, I shall have atoned for it with my blood!

When the Baronet had finished, there was a universal desire expressed to see the painting of this frightful visage. After much entreaty, the Baronet consented, on condition that they should only visit it one by one. He called his housekeeper, and gave her charge to conduct the gentlemen, singly, to the chamber. They all returned varying in their stories. Some affected in one way, some in another; some more, some less; but all agreeing that there was a certain something about the painting that had a very odd effect upon the feelings.

I stood in a deep bow-window with the Baronet, and could not help expressing my wonder. "After all," said I, "there are certain mysteries in our nature, certain inscrutable impulses and influences, which warrant one in being superstitious. Who can account for so many persons of different characters being thus strangely affected by a mere painting?"

"And especially when not one of them has seen it?" said the Baronet, with a smile.

"How!" exclaimed I, "not seen it?"

"Not one of them!" replied he, laying his finger on his lips, in sign of secrecy. "I saw that some of them were in a bantering vein, and did not choose that the memento of the poor Italian should be made a jest of. So I gave the housekeeper a hint to show them all to a different chamber!"

Thus end the stories of the Nervous Gentleman.

PART II.

BUCKTHORNE AND HIS FRIENDS.

This world is the best that we live in,
To lend, or to spend, or to give in;
But to beg, or to borrow, or get a man's own,
'Tis the very worst world, sir, that ever was known.
Lines from an Inn Window.

LITERARY LIFE.

Among other subjects of a traveller's curiosity, I had at one time a great craving after anecdotes of literary life; and being at London, one of the most noted places for the production of books, I was excessively anxious to know something of the animals which produced them. Chance fortunately threw me in the way of a literary man by the name of Buckthorne, an eccentric personage, who had lived much in the metropolis, and could give me the natural history of every odd animal to be met with in that wilderness of men. He readily imparted to me some useful hints upon the subject of my inquiry.

"The literary world," said he, "is made up of little confederacies, each looking upon its own members as the lights of the universe; and considering all others as mere transient meteors, doomed soon to fall and be forgotten, while its own luminaries are to shine steadily on to immortality."

"And pray," said I, "how is a man to get a peep into those confederacies you speak of? I presume an intercourse with authors is a kind of intellectual exchange, where one must bring his commodities to barter, and always give a *quid pro quo*."

"Pooh, pooh! how you mistake," said Buckthorne, smiling; "you must never think to become popular among wits by shining. They go into society to shine themselves, not to admire the brilliancy of others. I once thought as you do, and never went into literary society without studying my part beforehand; the consequence was, that I soon got the name of an intolerable proser, and should in a little while have been completely excommunicated had I not changed my plan of operations. No, sir, no character succeeds so well among wits as that of a good listener; or if ever

you are eloquent let it be when tête-à-tête with an author, and then in praise of his own works, or, what is nearly as acceptable, in disparagement of the works of his contemporaries. If ever he speaks favourably of the productions of a particular friend, dissent boldly from him; pronounce his friend to be a blockhead; never fear his being vexed; much as people speak of the irritability of authors, I never found one to take offence at such contradictions. No, no, sir, authors are particularly candid in admitting the faults of their friends.

"Indeed, I would advise you to be extremely sparing of remarks on all modern works, except to make sarcastic observations on the most distinguished writers of the day."

"Faith," said I, "I'll praise none that have not been dead for at least half a century."

"Even then," observed Mr. Buckthorne, "I would advise you to be rather cautious; for you must know that many old writers have been enlisted under the banners of different sects, and their merits have become as completely topics of party discussion as the merits of living statesmen and politicians. Nay, there have been whole periods of literature absolutely taboo'd, to use a South Sea phrase. It is, for example, as much as a man's critical reputation is worth in some circles, to say a word in praise of any of the writers of the reign of Charles the Second, or even of Queen Anne, they being all declared Frenchmen in disguise."

"And pray," said I, "when am I then to know that I am on safe grounds, being totally unacquainted with the literary landmarks, and the boundary line of fashionable taste."

"Oh!" replied he, "there is fortunately one tract of literature which forms a kind of neutral ground, on which all the literary meet amicably, and run riot in the excess of their good humour; and this is in the reigns of Elizabeth and James. Here you may praise away at random. Here it is 'cut and come again;' and the more obscure the author, and the more quaint and crabbed his style, the more your admiration will smack of the real relish of the connoisseur; whose taste, like that of an epicure, is always for game that has an antiquated flavour.

"But," continued he, "as you seem anxious to know something of literary society, I will take an opportunity to introduce you to some coterie, where the talents of the day are assembled. I cannot promise you, however, that they will all be of the first order. Somehow or other, our great geniuses are not gregarious; they do not go in flocks, but fly singly in general society. They prefer mingling like common men with the multitude, and are apt to carry nothing of the author about them but the reputation. It is only the inferior orders that herd together, acquire strength and importance by their confederacies, and bear all the distinctive characteristics of their species."

A LITERARY DINNER.

A FEW days after this conversation with Mr. Buckthorne, he called upon me, and took me with him to a regular literary dinner. It was given by a great bookseller, or rather a company of booksellers, whose firm surpassed in length that of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.

I was surprised to find between twenty and thirty guests assembled, most of whom I had never seen before. Mr. Buckthorne explained this to me, by informing me that this was a business dinner, or kind of field-day, which the house gave about twice a year to its authors. It is true they did occasionally give snug dinners to three or four literary men at a time; but then these were generally select authors, favourites of the public, such as had arrived at their sixth or seventh editions. "There are," said he, "certain geographical boundaries in the land of literature, and you may judge tolerably well of an author's popularity by the wine his bookseller gives him. An author crosses the port line about the third edition, and gets into claret; and when he has reached the sixth or seventh, he may revel in champagne and Burgundy."

"And pray," said I, "how far may these gentlemen have reached that I see around me; are any of these claret drinkers?"

"Not exactly, not exactly. You find at these great dinners the common steady run of authors, one or two edition men; or if any others are invited, they are aware that it is a kind of republican meeting.—You understand me—a meeting of the republic of letters; and that they must expect nothing but plain substantial fare."

These hints enabled me to comprehend more fully the arrangement of the table. The two ends were occupied by two partners of the house; and the host seemed to have adopted Addison's idea as to the literary precedence of his guests. A popular poet had the post of honour; opposite to whom was a hot-pressed traveller in quarto with plates. A grave-looking antiquarian, who had produced several solid works, that were much quoted and little read, was treated with great respect, and seated next to a neat dressy gentleman in black, who had written a thin, genteel, hot-pressed octavo on political economy, that was getting into fashion. Several three-volumed duodecimo men, of fair currency, were placed about the centre of the table; while the lower end was taken up with small poets, translators, and authors who had not as yet risen into much notoriety.

The conversation during dinner was by fits and starts; breaking out here and there in various parts of the table in small flashes, and ending in smoke. The poet, who had the confidence of a man on good terms with the world, and independent of his bookseller, was very gay and brilliant, and said many clever things which set the partner next him in a roar, and delighted all the company. The other partner, however, maintained his sedateness, and kept carving

on, with the air of a thorough man of business, intent upon the occupation of the moment. His gravity was explained to me by my friend Buckthorne. He informed me that the concerns of the house were admirably distributed among the partners. "Thus, for instance," said he, "the grave gentleman is the carving partner, who attends to the joints; and the other is the laughing partner, who attends to the jokes."

The general conversation was chiefly carried on at the upper end of the table, as the authors there seemed to possess the greatest courage of the tongue. As to the crew at the lower end, if they did not make much figure in talking, they did in eating. Never was there a more determined, inveterate, thoroughly sustained attack on the trencher than by this phalanx of masticators. When the cloth was removed, and the wine began to circulate, they grew very merry and jocose among themselves. Their jokes, however, if by chance any of them reached the upper end of the table, seldom produced much effect. Even the laughing partner did not think it necessary to honour them with a smile; which my neighbour Buckthorne accounted for, by informing me that there was a certain degree of popularity to be obtained before a bookseller could afford to laugh at an author's jokes.

Among this crew of questionable gentlemen thus seated below the salt, my eye singled out one in particular. He was rather shabbily dressed; though he had evidently made the most of a rusty black coat, and wore his shirt-frill plaited and puffed out voluminously at the bosom. His face was dusky, but florid, perhaps a little too florid, particularly about the nose; though the rosy hue gave the greater lustre to a twinkling black eye. He had a little the look of a boon companion, with that dash of the poor devil in it which gives an inexpressibly mellow tone to a man's humour. I had seldom seen a face of richer promise; but never was promise so ill kept. He said nothing, ate and drank with the keen appetite of a garreteer, and scarcely stopped to laugh, even at the good jokes from the upper end of the table. I inquired who he was. Buckthorne looked at him attentively: "Gad," said he, "I have seen that face before, but where I cannot recollect. He cannot be an author of any note. I suppose some writer of sermons, or grinder of foreign travels."

After dinner we retired to another room to take tea and coffee, where we were reinforced by a cloud of inferior guests,—authors of small volumes in boards, and pamphlets stitched in blue paper. These had not as yet arrived to the importance of a dinner invitation, but were invited occasionally to pass the evening in a friendly way. They were very respectful to the partners, and, indeed, seemed to stand a little in awe of them; but they paid devoted court to the lady of the house, and were extravagantly fond of the children. Some few, who did not feel confidence enough to make such advances, stood shyly off in corners, talking to one another; or

turned over the portfolios of prints which they had not seen above five thousand times, or moused over the music on the forte-piano.

The poet and the thin octavo gentleman were the persons most current and at their ease in the drawing-room; being men evidently of circulation in the West End. They got on each side of the lady of the house, and paid her a thousand compliments and civilities, at some of which I thought she would have expired with delight. Everything they said and did had the odour of fashionable life. I looked round in vain for the poor devil author in the rusty black coat; he had disappeared immediately after leaving the table, having a dread, no doubt, of the glaring light of a drawing-room. Finding nothing further to interest my attention, I took my departure soon after coffee had been served, leaving the poet, and the thin, genteel hot-pressed octavo gentleman, masters of the field.

THE CLUB OF QUEER FELLOWS.

I THINK it was the very next evening that, in coming out of Covent Garden Theatre, with my eccentric friend Buckthorne, he proposed to give me another peep at life and character. Finding me willing for any research of the kind, he took me through a variety of the narrow courts and lanes about Covent Garden, until we stopped before a tavern from which we heard the bursts of merriment of a jovial party. There would be a loud peal of laughter, then an interval, then another peal, as if a prime wag were telling a story. After a little while there was a song, and at the close of each stanza a hearty roar, and a vehement thumping on the table.

"This is the place," whispered Buckthorne; "it is the club of queer fellows, a great resort of the small wits, third-rate actors, and newspaper critics of the theatres. Any one can go in on paying sixpence at the bar for the use of the club."

We entered, therefore, without ceremony, and took our seats at a lone table in a dusky corner of the room. The club was assembled round a table, on which stood beverages of various kinds, according to the tastes of the individuals. The members were a set of queer fellows indeed; but what was my surprise on recognising, in the prime wit of the meeting, the poor-devil author whom I had remarked at the booksellers' dinner for his promising face and his complete taciturnity. Matters, however, were entirely changed with him. There he was a mere cipher; here he was lord of the ascendant, the choice spirit, the dominant genius. He sat at the head of the table with his hat on, and an eye beaming even more luminously than his nose. He had a quip and a fillip for every one, and a good thing on every occasion. Nothing could be said or done without eliciting a spark from him; and I solemnly declare I have heard much worse wit even from noblemen. His jokes, it must be confessed, were rather wet, but they suited the circle over which he presided. The company were in

that maudlin mood, when a little wit goes a great way. Every time he opened his lips there was sure to be a roar; and even sometimes before he had time to speak.

We were fortunate enough to enter in time for a glee composed by him expressly for the club, and which he sang with two boon companions, who would have been worthy subjects for Hogarth's pencil. As they were each provided with a written copy, I was enabled to procure the reading of it.

Merrily, merrily push round the glass,
And merrily troll the glee,
For he who won't drink till he wink, is an ass,
So, neighbour, I drink to thee.

Merrily, merrily, fuddle thy nose,
Until it right rosy shall be;
For a jolly red nose, I speak under the rose,
Is a sign of good company.

We waited until the party broke up, and no one but the wit remained. He sat at the table with his legs stretched under it and wide apart; his hands in his breeches pockets; his head drooped upon his breast; and gazing with lacklustre countenance on an empty tankard. His gaiety was gone, his fire completely quenched.

My companion approached, and startled him from his fit of brown study, introducing himself on the strength of their having dined together at the booksellers'.

"By the way," said he, "it seems to me I have seen you before; your face is surely that of an old acquaintance, though for the life of me I cannot tell where I have known you."

"Very likely," replied he, with a smile; "many of my old friends have forgotten me. Though, to tell the truth, my memory in this instance is as bad as your own. If, however, it will assist your recollection in any way, my name is Thomas Dribble, at your service."

"What! Tom Dribble, who was at Old Birchell's school, in Warwickshire?"

"The same," said the other, coolly.

"Why, then, we are old schoolmates, though it's no wonder you don't recollect me. I was your junior by several years; don't you recollect little Jack Buckthorne?"

Here there ensued a scene of a school-fellow recognition, and a world of talk about old school times and school pranks. Mr. Dribble ended by observing, with a heavy sigh, "that times were sadly changed since those days."

"Faith, Mr. Dribble," said I, "you seem quite a different man here from what you were at dinner. I had no idea that you had so much stuff in you. There you were all silence, but here you absolutely keep the table in a roar."

"Ah! my dear sir," replied he, with a shake of the head, and a shrug of the shoulder, "I am a mere glow-worm. I never

shine by daylight. Besides it's a hard thing for a poor devil of an author to shine at the table of a rich bookseller. Who do you think would laugh at any thing I could say, when I had some of the current wits of the day about me? But here, though a poor devil, I am among still poorer devils than myself; men who look up to me as a man of letters, and a belle-esprit, and all my jokes pass as sterling gold from the mint."

"You surely do yourself injustice, sir," said I; "I have certainly heard more good things from you this evening, than from any of those beaux-esprits by whom you appear to have been so daunted."

"Ah, sir! but they have luck on their side: they are in the fashion—there's nothing like being in fashion. A man that has once got his character up for a wit is always sure of a laugh, say what he may. He may utter as much nonsense as he pleases, and all will pass current. No one stops to question the coin of a rich man; but a poor devil cannot pass off either a joke or a guinea, without its being examined on both sides. Wit and coin are always doubted with a threadbare coat."

"For my part," continued he, giving his hat a twitch a little more on one side,—"for my part, I hate your fine dinners; there's nothing, sir, like the freedom of a chop-house. I'd rather any time have my steak and tankard among my own set, than drink claret and eat venison with your cursed civil, elegant company, who never laugh at a good joke from a poor devil for fear of its being vulgar. A good joke grows in a wet soil; it flourishes in low places, but withers on your d—d high, dry grounds. I once kept high company, sir, until I nearly ruined myself; I grew so dull, and vapid, and genteel. Nothing saved me but being arrested by my landlady, and thrown into prison; where a course of catch-clubs, eightpenny ale, and poor devil company, manured my mind, and brought it back to itself again."

As it was now growing late, we parted for the evening, though I felt anxious to know more of this practical philosopher. I was glad, therefore, when Buckthorne proposed to have another meeting, to talk over old school times, and inquired his schoolmate's address. The latter seemed at first a little shy of naming his lodgings; but suddenly, assuming an air of hardihood, "Green-arbor court, sir," exclaimed he—"Number—in Green-arbor court. You must know the place. Classic ground, sir, classic ground! It was there Goldsmith wrote his Vicar of Wakefield—I always like to live in literary haunts."

I was amused with this whimsical apology for shabby quarters. On our way homeward, Buckthorne assured me that this Dribble had been the prime wit and great wag of the school in their boyish days, and one of those unlucky urchins denominated bright geniuses. As he perceived me curious respecting his old schoolmate, he promised to take me with him in his proposed visit to Green-arbor court.

A few mornings afterward he called upon me, and we set forth

on our expedition. He led me through a variety of singular alleys, and courts, and blind passages; for he appeared to be perfectly versed in all the intricate geography of the metropolis. At length we came out upon Fleet-market, and traversing it, turned up a narrow street to the bottom of a long steep flight of stone steps, called Break-neck-stairs. These, he told me, led up to Green-arbor court, and that down them poor Goldsmith might many a time have risked his neck. When we entered the court, I could not but smile to think in what out-of-the-way corners genius produces her bantlings! And the muses, those capricious dames, who, forsooth, so often refuse to visit palaces, and deny a single smile to votaries in splendid studies, and gilded drawing-rooms,—what holes and burrows will they frequent to lavish their favours on some ragged disciple.

This Green-arbor court I found to be a small square, surrounded by tall and miserable houses, the very intestines of which seemed turned inside out, to judge from the old garments and frippery fluttering from every window. It appeared to be a region of washerwomen, and lines were stretched about the little square, on which clothes were dangling to dry.

Just as we entered the square, a scuffle took place between two virago about a disputed right to a wash-tub, and immediately the whole community was in a hubbub. Heads in mob-caps popped out of every window, and such a clamour of tongues ensued, that I was fain to stop my ears. Every amazon took part with one or other of the disputants, and brandished her arms, dripping with soap-suds, and fired away from her window as from the embrasure of a fortress; while the swarms of children nestled and cradled in every procreant chamber of this hive, waking with the noise, set up their shrill pipes to swell the general concert.

Poor Goldsmith! what a time must he have had of it, with his quiet disposition and nervous habits, penned up in this den of noise and vulgarity! How strange, that while every sight and sound was sufficient to embitter the heart, and fill it with misanthropy, his pen should be dropping the honey of Hybla! Yet it is more than probable that he drew many of his inimitable pictures of low life from the scenes which surrounded him in this abode. The circumstance of Mrs. Tibbs being obliged to wash her husband's two shirts in a neighbour's house, who refused to lend her wash-tub, may have been no sport of fancy, but a fact passing under his own eye. His landlady may have sat for the picture, and Beau Tibbs' scanty wardrobe have been a *fac-simile* of his own.

It was with some difficulty that we found our way to Dribble's lodgings. They were up two pair of stairs, in a room that looked upon the court, and when we entered, he was seated on the edge of his bed, writing at a broken table. He received us, however, with a free, open, poor-devil air, that was irresistible. It is true he did at first appear slightly confused; buttoned up his waistcoat

a little higher, and tucked in a stray frill of linen. But he recollected himself in an instant; gave a half swagger, half leer, as he stepped forth to receive us; drew a three-legged stool for Mr. Buckthorne; pointed me to a lumbering old damask chair, that looked like a dethroned monarch in exile; and bade us welcome to his garret.

We soon got engaged in conversation. Buckthorne and he had much to say about early school scenes; and as nothing opens a man's heart more than recollections of the kind, we soon drew from him a brief outline of his literary career.

THE POOR-DEVIL AUTHOR.

I BEGAN life unluckily by being the wag and bright fellow at school; and I had the further misfortune of becoming the great genius of my native village. My father was a country attorney, and intended I should succeed him in business; but I had too much genius to study, and he was too fond of my genius to force it into the traces; so I fell into bad company, and took to bad habits. Do not mistake me. I mean that I fell into the company of village literati, and village blues, and took to writing village poetry.

It was quite the fashion in the village to be literary. There was a little knot of choice spirits of us, who assembled frequently together, formed ourselves into a Literary, Scientific, and Philosophical Society, and fancied ourselves the most learned Philos in existence. Every one had a great character assigned him, suggested by some casual habit or affectation. One heavy fellow drank an enormous quantity of tea, rolled in his arm-chair, talked sententiously, pronounced dogmatically, and was considered a second Dr. Johnson; another, who happened to be a curate, uttered coarse jokes, wrote doggerel rhymes, and was the Swift of our association. Thus we had also our Popes, and Goldsmiths, and Addisons; and a blue-stocking lady, whose drawing-room we frequented, who corresponded about nothing with all the world, and wrote letters with the stiffness and formality of a printed book, was cried up as another Mrs. Montagu. I was, by common consent, the juvenile prodigy, the poetical youth, the great genius, the pride and hope of the village, through whom it was to become one day as celebrated as Stratford on Avon.

My father died, and left me his blessing and his business. His blessing brought no money into my pocket; and as to his business, it soon deserted me; for I was busy writing poetry, and could not attend to law, and my clients, though they had great respect for my talents, had no faith in a poetical attorney.

I lost my business, therefore, spent my money, and finished my poem. It was the Pleasures of Melancholy, and was cried up to the skies by the whole circle. The Pleasures of Imagination, the Pleasures of Hope, and the Pleasures of Memory, though each had placed its author in the first rank of poets, were blank prose

in comparison. Our Mrs. Montagu would cry over it from beginning to end. It was pronounced by all the members of the Literary, Scientific, and Philosophical Society, the greatest poem of the age, and all anticipated the noise it would make in the great world. There was not a doubt but the London booksellers would be mad after it, and the only fear of my friends was, that I would make a sacrifice by selling it too cheap. Every time they talked the matter over, they increased the price. They reckoned up the great sums given for the poems of certain popular writers, and determined that mine was worth more than all put together, and ought to be paid for accordingly. For my part, I was modest in my expectations, and determined that I would be satisfied with a thousand guineas. So I put my poem in my pocket, and set off for London.

My journey was joyous. My heart was light as my purse, and my head full of anticipations of fame and fortune. With what swelling pride did I cast my eyes upon old London from the heights of Highgate! I was like a general, looking down upon a place he expects to conquer. The great metropolis lay stretched before me, buried under a home-made cloud of murky smoke, that wrapped it from the brightness of a sunny day, and formed for it a kind of artificial bad weather. At the outskirts of the city, away to the west, the smoke gradually decreased until all was clear and sunny, and the view stretched uninterrupted to the blue line of the Kentish hills.

My eye turned fondly to where the mighty cupola of St. Paul swelled dimly through this misty chaos, and I pictured to myself the solemn realm of learning that lies about its base. How soon should the Pleasures of Melancholy throw this world of booksellers and printers into a bustle of business and delight! How soon should I hear my name repeated by printers' devils throughout Paternoster-row, and Angel-court, and Ave-Maria-lane, until Amen-corner should echo back the sound!

Arrived in town, I repaired at once to the most fashionable publisher. Every new author patronises him of course. In fact, it had been determined in the village circle that he should be the fortunate man. I cannot tell you how vain-gloriously I walked the streets. My head was in the clouds. I felt the airs of heaven playing about it, and fancied it already encircled by a halo of literary glory. As I passed by the windows of bookshops, I anticipated the time when my work would be shining among the hot-pressed wonders of the day; and my face, scratched on copper, or cut on wood, figuring in fellowship with those of Scott, and Byron, and Moore.

When I applied at the publisher's house, there was something in the loftiness of my air, and the dinginess of my dress, that struck the clerk with reverence. They doubtless took me for some person of consequence; probably a digger of Greek roots, or a penetrater of pyramids. A proud man in a dirty shirt is always an imposing

character in the world of letters; one must feel intellectually secure before he can venture to dress shabbily; none but a great genius, or a great scholar, dares to be dirty; so I was ushered at once to the sanctum sanctorum of this high priest of Minerva.

The publishing of books is a very different affair now-a-days from what it was in the time of Bernard Lintot. I found the publisher a fashionable dressed man, in an elegant drawing-room furnished with sofas and portraits of celebrated authors, and cases of splendidly-bound books. He was writing letters at an elegant table. This was transacting business in style. The place seemed suited to the magnificent publications that issued from it. I rejoiced at the choice I had made of a publisher, for I always liked to encourage men of taste and spirit.

I stepped up to the table with the lofty poetical port I had been accustomed to maintain in our village circle; though I threw in it something of a patronising air, such as one feels when about to make a man's fortune. The publisher paused with his pen in hand, and seemed waiting in mute suspense to know what was to be announced by so singular an apparition.

I put him at his ease in a moment, for I felt that I had but to come, see, and conquer. I made known my name, and the name of my poem; produced my precious roll of blotted manuscript; laid it on the table with an emphasis; and told him at once, to save time, and come directly to the point, the price was one thousand guineas.

I had given him no time to speak, nor did he seem so inclined. He continued looking at me for a moment with an air of whimsical perplexity; scanned me from head to foot; looked down at the manuscript, then up again at me, then pointed to a chair; and whistling softly to himself, went on writing his letter.

I sat for some time waiting his reply, supposing he was making up his mind; but he only paused occasionally to take a fresh dip of ink, to stroke his chin, or the tip of his nose, and then resumed his writing. It was evident his mind was intently occupied upon some other subject; but I had no idea that any other subject should be attended to, and my poem lie unnoticed on the table. I had supposed that everything would make way for the Pleasures of Melancholy.

My gorge at length rose within me. I took up my manuscript, thrust it into my pocket, and walked out of the room; making some noise as I went out, to let my departure be heard. The publisher, however, was too much buried in minor concerns to notice it. I was suffered to walk down stairs without being called back. I sallied forth into the street, but no clerk was sent for me; nor did the publisher call after me from the drawing-room window. I have been told since, that he considered me either a madman or a fool. I leave you to judge how much he was in the wrong in his opinion.

When I turned the corner my crest fell. I cooled down in my pride and my expectations, and reduced my terms with the next

bookseller to whom I applied. I had no better success; nor with a third, nor with a fourth. I then desired the booksellers to make an offer themselves; but the deuce an offer would they make. They told me poetry was a mere drug; every body wrote poetry; the market was overstocked with it. And then they said, the title of my poem was not taking; that pleasures of all kinds were worn threadbare, nothing but horrors did now-a-days, and even those were almost worn out. Tales of Pirates, Robbers, and bloody Turks, might answer tolerably well; but then they must come from some established well-known name, or the public would not look at them.

At last I offered to leave my poem with a bookseller to read it, and judge for himself. "Why, really, my dear Mr. ——a—a—I forget your name," said he, casting an eye at my rusty coat and shabby gaiters, "really, sir, we are so pressed with business just now, and have so many manuscripts on hand to read, that we have not time to look at any new productions; but if you can call again in a week or two, or say the middle of next month, we may be able to look over your writings, and give you an answer. Don't forget, the month after next; good morning, sir; happy to see you any time you are passing this way." So saying, he bowed me out in the civilest way imaginable. In short, sir, instead of an eager competition to secure my poem, I could not even get it read! In the meantime I was harassed by letters from my friends, wanting to know when the work was to appear; who was to be my publisher; but above all things, warning me not to let it go too cheap.

There was but one alternative left. I determined to publish the poem myself; and to have my triumph over the booksellers, when it should become the fashion of the day. I accordingly published the Pleasures of Melancholy, and ruined myself. Excepting the copies sent to the reviews, and to my friends in the country, not one, I believe, ever left the bookseller's warehouse. The printer's bill drained my purse, and the only notice that was taken of my work, was contained in the advertisements paid for by myself.

I could have borne all this, and have attributed it, as usual, to the mismanagement of the publisher, or the want of taste in the public; and could have made the usual appeal to posterity; but my village friends would not let me rest in quiet. They were picturing me to themselves feasting with the great, communing with the literary, and in the high career of fortune and renown. Every little while, some one would call on me with a letter of introduction from the village circle, recommending him to my attentions, and requesting that I would make him known in society; with a hint that an introduction to a celebrated literary nobleman would be extremely agreeable. I determined, therefore, to change my lodgings, drop my correspondence, and disappear altogether from the view of my village admirers. Besides, I was anxious to make one more poetic attempt. I was by no means disheartened by the failure of my first. My poem was evidently too didactic.

The public was wise enough. It no longer
"They want horrors, do they?" said I: "I' faith! then they shall have enough of them." So I looked out for some quiet, retired place, where I might be out of reach of my friends, and have leisure to cook up some delectable dish of poetical "hell-broth."

I had some difficulty in finding a place to my mind, when chance threw me in the way of Canonbury Castle. It is an ancient brick tower, hard by "merry Islington;" the remains of a hunting-seat of Queen Elizabeth, where she took the pleasure of the country when the neighbourhood was all woodland. What gave it particular interest in my eyes was the circumstance that it had been the residence of a poet.

It was here Goldsmith resided when he wrote his Deserted Village. I was shown the very apartment. It was a relic of the original style of the castle, with panelled wainscots and Gothic windows. I was pleased with its air of antiquity, and with its having been the residence of poor Goldy.

"Goldsmith was a pretty poet," said I to myself, "a very pretty poet, though rather of the old school. He did not think and feel so strongly as is the fashion now-a-days; but had he lived in these times of hot hearts and hot heads, he would no doubt have written quite differently."

In a few days I was quietly established in my new quarters; my books all arranged; my writing-desk placed by a window looking out into the fields; and I felt as snug as Robinson Crusoe, when he had finished his bower. For several days I enjoyed all the novelty of change and the charms which grace new lodgings, before one has found out their defects. I rambled about the fields where I fancied Goldsmith had rambled. I explored merry Islington; ate my solitary dinner at the Black Bull, which, according to tradition, was a country-seat of Sir Walter Raleigh; and would sit and sip my wine, and muse on old times, in a quaint old room, where many a council had been held.

All this did very well for a few days. I was stimulated by novelty; inspired by the associations awakened in my mind by these curious haunts; and began to think I felt the spirit of composition stirring within me. But Sunday came, and with it the whole city world, swarming about Canonbury Castle. I could not open my window but I was stunned with shouts and noises from the cricket-ground; the late quiet road beneath my window was alive with the tread of feet and clack of tongues; and, to complete my misery, I found that my quiet retreat was absolutely a "show house," the tower and its contents being shown to strangers at sixpence a head.

There was a perpetual tramping up stairs of citizens and their families, to look about the country from the top of the tower, and to take a peep at the city through the telescope, to try if they could discern their own chimneys. And then, in the midst of a

vein of thought, or a moment of inspiration, I was interrupted, and all my ideas put to flight, by my intolerable landlady's tapping at the door, and asking me if I would "just please to let a lady and gentleman come in, to take a look at Mr. Goldsmith's room." If you know any thing of what an author's study is, and what an author is himself, you must know that there was no standing this. I put a positive interdict on my room's being exhibited; but then it was shown when I was absent, and my papers put in confusion; and, on returning home one day, I absolutely found a cursed tradesman and his daughters gaping over my manuscripts, and my landlady in a panic at my appearance. I tried to make out a little longer, by taking the key in my pocket; but it would not do. I overheard mine hostess one day telling some of her customers on the stairs, that the room was occupied by an author, who was always in a tantrum if interrupted; and I immediately perceived, by a slight noise at the door, that they were peeping at me through the key-hole. By the head of Apollo, but this was quite too much! With all my eagerness for fame, and my ambition of the stare of the million, I had no idea of being exhibited by retail, at sixpence a head, and that through a key-hole. So I bid adieu to Canonbury Castle, merry Islington, and the haunts of poor Goldsmith, without having advanced a single line in my labours.

My next quarters were at a small, whitewashed cottage, which stands not far from Hampstead, just on the brow of a hill; looking over Chalk Farm and Camden Town, remarkable for the rival houses of Mother Red Cap and Mother Black Cap; and so across Cracksculi Common to the distant city.

The cottage was in no wise remarkable in itself; but I regarded it with reverence, for it had been the asylum of a persecuted author. Hither poor Steele had retreated, and lain perdu, when persecuted by creditors and bailiffs—those immemorial plagues of authors and free-spirited gentlemen; and here he had written many numbers of the Spectator. It was hence, too, that he had despatched those little notes to his lady, so full of affection and whimsicality, in which the fond husband, the careless gentleman, and the shifting spendthrift, were so oddly blended. I thought, as I first eyed the window of his apartment, that I could sit within it and write volumes.

No such thing! It was haymaking season, and, as ill-luck would have it, immediately opposite the cottage was a little alehouse, with the sign of the Load of Hay. Whether it was there in Steele's time, I cannot say; but it set all attempts at conception or inspiration at defiance. It was the resort of all the Irish haymakers who mow the broad fields in the neighbourhood; and of drovers and teamsters who travel that road. Here they would gather in the endless summer twilight, or by the light of the harvest moon, and sit round a table at the door; and tipple, and laugh and quarrel, and fight, and sing drowsy songs, and dawdle

away the hours, until the deep solemn notes of St. Paul's clock would warn the varlets home.

In the daytime I was still less able to write. It was broad summer. The haymakers were at work in the fields, and the perfume of the new-mown hay brought with it the recollection of my native fields. So, instead of remaining in my room to write, I went wandering about Primrose Hill, and Hampstead Heights, and Shepherd's Fields, and all those Arcadian scenes so celebrated by London bards. I cannot tell you how many delicious hours I have passed, lying on the cocks of new-mown hay, on the pleasant slopes of some of those hills, inhaling the fragrance of the fields, while the summer-fly buzzed about me, or the grasshopper leaped into my bosom; and how I have gazed with half-shut eye upon the smoky mass of London, and listened to the distant sound of its population, and pitied the poor sons of earth, toiling in its bowels, like Gnomes in the "dark gold mine."

People may say what they please about cockney pastorals, but, after all, there is a vast deal of rural beauty about the western vicinity of London; and any one that has looked down upon the valley of West End, with its soft bosom of green pasturage lying open to the south, and dotted with cattle; the steeple of Hampstead rising among rich groves on the brow of the hill; and the learned height of Harrow in the distance; will confess that never has he seen a more absolutely rural landscape in the vicinity of a great metropolis.

Still, however, I found myself not a whit the better off for my frequent change of lodgings; and I began to discover, that in literature, as in trade, the old proverb holds good, "a rolling stone gathers no moss."

The tranquil beauty of the country played the very vengeance with me. I could not mount my fancy into the termagant vein. I could not conceive, amidst the smiling landscape, a scene of blood and murder; and the snug citizens in breeches and gaiters put all ideas of heroes and bandits out of my brain. I could think of nothing but dulcet subjects, "the Pleasures of Spring"—"the Pleasures of Solitude"—"the Pleasures of Tranquillity"—"the Pleasures of Sentiment"—nothing but pleasures; and I had the painful experience of "the Pleasures of Melancholy" too strongly in my recollection to be beguiled by them.

Chance at length befriended me. I had frequently, in my ramblings, loitered about Hampstead Hill, which is a kind of Parnassus of the metropolis. At such times I occasionally took my dinner at Jack Straw's Castle. It is a country inn so named: the very spot where that notorious rebel and his followers held their council of war. It is a favourite resort of citizens when rurally inclined, as it commands fine fresh air, and a good view of the city. I sat one day in the public room of this inn, ruminating over a beefsteak and a pint of port, when my imagination kindled up

with ancient and heroic images. I had long wanted a theme and a hero; both suddenly broke upon my mind. I determined to write a poem on the history of Jack Straw. I was so full of my subject, that I was fearful of being anticipated. I wondered that none of the poets of the day, in their search after ruffian heroes, had never thought of Jack Straw. I went to work pell-mell, blotted several sheets of paper with choice floating thoughts, and battles, and descriptions, to be ready at a moment's warning. In a few days' time, I sketched out the skeleton of my poem, and nothing was wanting but to give it flesh and blood. I used to take my manuscript, and stroll about Caen-wood, and read aloud; and would dine at the Castle, by way of keeping up the vein of thought.

I was there one day, at rather a late hour, in the public room. There was no other company, but one man, who sat enjoying his pint of port at a window, and noticing the passers-by. He was dressed in a green shooting-coat. His countenance was strongly marked: he had a hooked nose; a romantic eye, excepting that it had something of a squint; and altogether, as I thought, a poetical style of head. I was quite taken with the man, for you must know I am a little of a physiognomist; I set him down at once for either a poet or a philosopher.

As I like to make new acquaintances, considering every man a volume of human nature, I soon fell into conversation with the stranger, who, I was pleased to find, was by no means difficult of access. After I had dined, I joined him at the window, and we became so sociable that I proposed a bottle of wine together, to which he most cheerfully assented.

I was too full of my poem to keep long quiet on the subject, and began to talk about the origin of the tavern, and the history of Jack Straw. I found my new acquaintance to be perfectly at home on the topic, and to jump exactly with my humour in every respect. I became elevated by the wine and the conversation. In the fulness of an author's feelings, I told him of my projected poem, and repeated some passages, and he was in raptures. He was evidently of a strong poetical turn.

"Sir," said he, filling my glass at the same time, "our poets don't look at home. I don't see why we need go out of old England for robbers and rebels to write about. I like your Jack Straw, sir,—he's a home-made hero. I like him, sir—I like him exceedingly. He's English to the backbone—damme—Give me honest old England after all! Them's my sentiments, sir."

"I honour your sentiment," cried I, zealously; "it is exactly my own. An English ruffian is as good a ruffian for poetry as any in Italy, or Germany, or the Archipelago; but it is hard to make our poets think so."

"More shame for them!" replied the man in green. "What a plague would they have? What have we to do with their Archipelagos of Italy and Germany? Haven't we heaths and

commons and highways on our own little island—ay, and stout fellows to pad the hoof over them too? Stick to home, I say,—them's my sentiments.—Come, sir, my service to you—I agree with you perfectly."

"Poets, in old times, had right notions on this subject," continued I; "witness the fine old ballads about Robin Hood, Allan a'Dale, and other staunch blades of yore."

"Right, sir, right," interrupted he; "Robin Hood! he was the lad to cry stand! to a man, and never to flinch."

"Ah, sir," said I, "they had famous bands of robbers in the good old times; those were glorious poetical days. The merry crew of Sherwood Forest, who led such a roving picturesque life 'under the greenwood tree.' I have often wished to visit their haunts, and tread the scenes of the exploits of Friar Tuck, and Clymm of the Clough, and Sir William of Cloudeslie."

"Nay, sir," said the gentleman in green, "we have had several very pretty gangs since their day. Those gallant dogs that kept about the great heaths in the neighbourhood of London, about Bagshot, and Hounslow and Blackheath, for instance. Come, sir, my service to you. You don't drink."

"I suppose," cried I, emptying my glass, "I suppose you have heard of the famous Turpin, who was born in this very village of Hampstead, and who used to lurk with his gang in Epping Forest about a hundred years since?"

"Have I?" cried he, "to be sure I have! A hearty old blade that. Sound as pitch. Old Turpentine! as we used to call him. A famous fine fellow, sir."

"Well, sir," continued I, "I have visited Waltham Abbey and Chingford Church merely from the stories I heard when a boy of his exploits there, and I have searched Epping Forest for the cavern where he used to conceal himself. You must know," added I, "that I am a sort of amateur of highwaymen. They were dashing, daring fellows: the best apologies that we had for the knights-errant of yore. Ah, sir! the country has been sinking gradually into tameness and commonplace. We are losing the old English spirit. The bold knights of the Post have all dwindled down into lurking footpads and sneaking pickpockets; there's no such thing as a dashing, gentleman-like robbery committed now-a-days on the King's highways: a man may roll from one end of England to the other in a drowsy coach, or jingling post-chaise, without any other adventure than that of being occasionally overturned, sleeping in damp sheets, or having an ill-cooked dinner. We hear no more of public coaches being stopped and robbed by a well-mounted gang of resolute fellows, with pistols in their hands, and crapes over their faces. What a pretty poetical incident was it, for example, in domestic life, for a family carriage, on its way to a country seat, to be attacked about dark; the old gentleman eased of his purse and watch, the ladies of their necklaces and earings,

by a politely spoken highwayman on a blood mare, who afterwards leaped the hedge and galloped across the country, to the admiration of Miss Caroline, the daughter, who would write a long and romantic account of the adventure to her friend, Miss Juliana, in town. Ah, sir! we meet with nothing of such incidents now-a-days."

"That, sir," said my companion, taking advantage of a pause, when I stopped to recover breath, and to take a glass of wine which he had just poured out, "that, sir, craving your pardon, is not owing to any want of old English pluck. It is the effect of this cursed system of banking. People do not travel with bags of gold as they did formerly. They have post notes, and drafts on bankers. To rob a coach is like catching a crow, where you have nothing but carrion flesh and feathers for your pains. But a coach in old times, sir, was as rich as a Spanish galleon. It turned out the yellow boys bravely. And a private carriage was a cool hundred or two at least."

I cannot express how much I was delighted with the sallies of my new acquaintance. He told me that he often frequented the Castle, and would be glad to know more of me; and I promised myself many a pleasant afternoon with him, when I should read him my poem as it proceeded, and benefit by his remarks; for it was evident he had the true poetical feeling.

"Come, sir," said he, pushing the bottle: "Damme, I like you! you're a man after my own heart. I'm cursed slow in making new acquaintances. One must be on the reserve, you know. But when I meet with a man of your kidney, damme, my heart jumps at once to him. Them's my sentiments, sir. Come, sir, here's Jack Straw's health! I presume one can drink it now-a-days without treason!"

"With all my heart," said I gaily, "and Dick Turpin's into the bargain!"

"Ah, sir," said the man in green, "those are the kind of men for poetry. The Newgate Calendar, sir! the Newgate Calendar is your only reading! There's the place to look for bold deeds and dashing fellows."

We were so much pleased with each other that we sat until a late hour. I insisted on paying the bill, for both my purse and my heart were full, and I agreed that he should pay the score at our next meeting. As the coaches had all gone that run between Hampstead and London, we had to return on foot. He was so delighted with the idea of my poem that he could talk of nothing else. He had made me repeat such passages as I could remember; and though I did it in a very mangled manner, having a wretched memory, yet he was in raptures.

Every now and then he would break out with some scrap which he would misquote most terribly, would rub his hands and exclaim, "By Jupiter that's fine that's noble! Damme, sir, if I can conceive how you hit upon such ideas!"

I must confess I did not always relish his misquotations, which

sometimes made absolute nonsense of the passages; but what author stands upon trifles when he is praised?

Never had I spent a more delightful evening. I did not perceive how the time flew. I could not bear to separate, but continued walking on, arm in arm, with him, past my lodgings, through Camden Town, and across Crackskull Common, talking the whole way about my poem.

When we were half-way across the common, he interrupted me in the midst of a quotation, by telling me that this had been a famous place for footpads, and was still occasionally infested by them; and that a man had recently been shot there in attempting to defend himself.—"The more fool he!" cried I; "a man is an idiot to risk life, or even limb, to save a paltry purse of money. It's quite a different case from that of a duel, where one's honour is concerned. For my part," added I, "I should never think of making resistance against one of those desperadoes."

"Say you so?" cried my friend in green, turning suddenly upon me, and putting a pistol to my breast; "why, then, have at you, my lad!—come—disburse! empty! unsack!"

In a word, I found that the muse had played me another of her tricks, and had betrayed me into the hands of a footpad. There was no time to parley; he made me turn my pockets inside out; and hearing the sound of distant footsteps, he made one fell swoop upon purse, watch and all; gave me a thwack over my unlucky pate, that laid me sprawling on the ground, and scampered away with his booty.

I saw no more of my friend in green until a year or two afterwards; when I caught a sight of his poetical countenance among a crew of scapegraces heavily ironed, who were on the way for transportation. He recognised me at once, tipped me an impudent wink, and asked me how I came on with the history of Jack Straw's Castle.

The catastrophe at Crackskull Common put an end to my summer's campaign. I was cured of my poetical enthusiasm for rebels, robbers and highwaymen. I was put out of conceit of my subject, and, what was worse, I was lightened of my purse, in which was almost every farthing I had in the world. So I abandoned Sir Richard Steele's cottage in despair, and crept into less celebrated, though no less poetical and airy lodgings in a garret in town.

I now determined to cultivate the society of the literary, and to enroll myself in the fraternity of authorship. It is by the constant collision of mind, thought I, that authors strike out the sparks of genius, and kindle up with glorious conceptions. Poetry is evidently a contagious complaint. I will keep company with poets; who knows but I may catch it as others have done?

I found no difficulty in making a circle of literary acquaintances, not having the sin of success lying at my door: indeed the failure of my poem was a kind of recommendation to their favour. It is

true my new friends were not of the most brilliant names in literature; but then if you would take their words for it, they were like the prophets of old, men of whom the world was not worthy; and who were to live in future ages, when the ephemeral favourites of the day should be forgotten.

I soon discovered, however, that the more I mingled in literary society, the less I felt capable of writing; that poetry was not so catching as I imagined; and that in familiar life there was often nothing less poetical than a poet. Besides, I wanted the *esprit du corps* to turn these literary fellowships to any account. I could not bring myself to enlist in any particular sect. I saw something to like in them all, but found that would never do, for that the tacit condition on which a man enters into one of these sects is, that he abuses all the rest.

I perceived that there were little knots of authors who lived with, and for, and by one another. They considered themselves the salt of the earth. They fostered and kept up a conventional vein of thinking, and talking, and joking on all subjects; and they cried each other up to the skies. Each sect had its particular creed; and set up certain authors as divinities, and fell down and worshipped them; and considered every one who did not worship them, or who worshipped any other, as a heretic and an infidel.

In quoting the writers of the day, I generally found them extolling names of which I had scarcely heard, and talking slightingly of others who were the favourites of the public. If I mentioned any recent work from the pen of a first-rate author, they had not read it; they had not time to read all that was spawned from the press; he wrote too much to write well;—and then they would break out into raptures about some Mr. Timson, or Tomson, or Jackson, whose works were neglected at the present day, but who was to be the wonder and delight of posterity! Alas! what heavy debts is this neglectful world daily accumulating on the shoulders of poor posterity!

But, above all, it was edifying to hear with what contempt they would talk of the great. Ye gods! how immeasurably the great are despised by the small fry of literature! It is true, an exception was now and then made of some nobleman, with whom, perhaps, they had casually shaken hands at an election, or hob or nobbed at a public dinner, and was pronounced a "devilish good fellow," and "no humbug;" but, in general, it was enough for a man to have a title, to be the object of their sovereign disdain: you have no idea how poetically and philosophically they would talk of nobility.

For my part this affected me but little; for though I had no bitterness against the great, and did not think the worse of a man for having innocently been born to a title, yet I did not feel myself at present called upon to resent the indignities poured upon them by the little. But the hostility to the great writers of the day went sore against the grain with me. I could not enter into such feuds, nor participate in such animosities. I had not become

author sufficiently to hate other authors. I could still find pleasure in the novelties of the press, and could find it in my heart to praise a contemporary, even though he were successful. Indeed I was miscellaneous in my taste, and could not confine it to any age or growth of writers. I could turn with delight from the glowing pages of Byron to the cool and polished raillery of Pope; and after wandering among the sacred groves of Paradise Lost, I could give myself up to voluptuous abandonment in the enchanted bowers of Lalla Rookh.

"I would have my authors," said I, "as various as my wines, and, in relishing the strong and the racy, would never decry the sparkling and exhilarating. Port and sherry are excellent standby's, and so is Madeira; but claret and Burgundy may be drunk now and then without disparagement to one's palate, and Champagne is a beverage by no means to be despised."

Such was the tirade I uttered one day when a little flushed with ale at a literary club. I uttered it, too, with something of a flourish, for I thought my simile a clever one. Unluckily, my auditors were men who drank beer and hated Pope; so my figure about wines went for nothing, and my critical toleration was looked upon as downright heterodoxy. In a word, I soon became like a freethinker in religion, an outlaw from every sect, and fair game for all. Such are the melancholy consequences of not hating in literature.

I see you are growing weary, so I will be brief with the residue of my literary career. I will not detain you with a detail of my various attempts to get astride of Pegasus; of the poems I have written which were never printed, the plays I have presented which were never performed, and the tracts I have published which were never purchased. It seemed as if booksellers, managers, and the very public, had entered into a conspiracy to starve me. Still I could not prevail upon myself to give up the trial, nor abandon those dreams of renown in which I had indulged. How should I be able to look the literary circle of my native village in the face, if I were so completely to falsify their predictions? For some time longer, therefore, I continued to write for fame, and was, of course, the most miserable dog in existence, besides being in continual risk of starvation. I accumulated loads of literary treasure on my shelves—loads which were to be treasures to posterity; but, alas! they put not a penny into my purse. What was all this wealth to my present necessities? I could not patch my elbows with an ode; nor satisfy my hunger with blank verse. "Shall a man fill his belly with the east wind?" says the proverb. He may as well do so as with poetry.

I have many a time strolled sorrowfully along, with a sad heart and an empty stomach, about five o'clock, and looked wistfully down the areas in the west end of the town, and seen through the kitchen windows the fires gleaming, and the joints of meat turning on the spits and dripping with gravy, and the cook-maids beating

up puddings, or trussing turkeys and felt for the moment that if I could but have the run of one of those kitchens, Apollo and the Muses might have the hungry heights of Parnassus for me. Oh, sir! talk of meditations among the tombs—they are nothing so melancholy as the meditations of a poor devil without penny in pouch, along a line of kitchen-windows towards dinner-time.

At length, when almost reduced to famine and despair, the idea all at once entered my head, that perhaps I was not so clever a fellow as the village and myself had supposed. It was the salvation of me. The moment the idea popped into my brain it brought conviction and comfort with it. I awoke as from a dream—I gave up immortal fame to those who could live on air; took to writing for mere bread; and have ever since had a very tolerable life of it. There is no man of letters so much at his ease, sir, as he who has no character to gain or lose. I had to train myself to it a little, and to clip my wings short at first, or they would have carried me up into poetry in spite of myself. So I determined to begin by the opposite extreme, and abandoning the higher regions of the craft, I came plump down to the lowest, and turned creeper.

"Creeper! and pray what is that?" said I.

"Oh, sir, I see you are ignorant of the language of the craft; a creeper is one who furnishes the newspapers with paragraphs at so much a line; and who goes about in quest of misfortunes; attends the Bow-street Office; the Courts of Justice, and every other den of mischief and iniquity. We are paid at the rate of a penny a line, and as we can sell the same paragraph to almost every paper, we sometimes pick up a very decent day's work. Now and then the Muse is unkind, or the day uncommonly quiet, and then we rather starve; and sometimes the unconscionable editors will clip our paragraphs when they are a little too rhetorical, and snip off two-pence or three-pence at a go. I have many a time had my pot of porter snipped off of my dinner in this way, and have had to dine with dry lips. However, I cannot complain. I rose gradually in the lower ranks of the craft, and am now, I think, in the most comfortable region of literature."

"And pray," said I, "what may you be at present?"

"At present," said he, "I am a regular job-writer, and turn my hand to anything. I work up the writings of others at so much a sheet; turn off translations; write second-rate articles to fill up reviews and magazines; compile travels and voyages, and furnish theatrical criticisms for the newspapers. All this authorship, you perceive, is anonymous; it gives me no reputation except among the trade; where I am considered an author of all work, and am always sure of employ. That's the only reputation I want. I sleep soundly, without dread of duns or critics, and leave immortal fame to those that choose to fret and fight about it. Take my word for it, the only happy author in this world is he who is below the care of reputation."

NOTORIETY.

When we had emerged from the literary nest of honest Dribble, and had passed safely through the dangers of Break-neck-stairs, and the labyrinths of Fleet-market, Buckthorne indulged in many comments upon the peep into literary life which he had furnished me.

I expressed my surprise at finding it so different a world from what I had imagined. "It is always so," said he, "with strangers. The land of literature is a fairy land to those who view it from a distance, but, like all other landscapes, the charm fades on a nearer approach, and the thorns and briers become visible. The republic of letters is the most factious and discordant of all republics, ancient or modern."

"Yet," said I, smiling, "you would not have me take honest Dribble's experience as a view of the land. He is but a mousing owl; a mere groundling. We should have quite a different strain from one of those fortunate authors whom we see sporting about the empyreal heights of fashion, like swallows in the blue sky of a summer's day."

"Perhaps we might," replied he, "but I doubt it. I doubt whether if any one, even of the most successful, were to tell his actual feelings, you would not find the truth of friend Dribble's philosophy with respect to reputation. One you would find carrying a gay face to the world, while some vulture critic was preying upon his very liver. Another, who was simple enough to mistake fashion for fame, you would find watching countenances, and cultivating invitations, more ambitious to figure in the *beau monde* than the world of letters, and apt to be rendered wretched by the neglect of an illiterate peer, or a dissipated duchess. Those who were rising to fame, you would find tormented with anxiety to get higher; and those who had gained the summit, in constant apprehension of a decline.

"Even those who are indifferent to the buzz of notoriety, and the farce of fashion, are not much better off, being incessantly harassed by intrusions on their leisure, and interruptions of their pursuits; for, whatever may be his feelings, when once an author is launched into notoriety, he must go the rounds until the idle curiosity of the day is satisfied, and he is thrown aside to make way for some new caprice. Upon the whole, I do not know but he is most fortunate who engages in the whirl through ambition, however tormenting; as it is doubly irksome to be obliged to join in the game without being interested in the stake.

"There is a constant demand in the fashionable world for novelty: every nine days must have its wonder, no matter of what kind. At one time it is an author; at another a fire-eater; at another a composer, an Indian juggler, or an Indian chief; a man from the North Pole or the Pyramids; each figures through his brief term of notoriety, and then makes way for the succeed-

ing wonder. You must know that we have oddity fanciers among our ladies of rank, who collect about them all kinds of remarkable beings; fiddlers, statesmen, singers, warriors, artists, philosophers, actors, and poets; every kind of personage, in short, who is noted for something peculiar; so that their routs are like fancy balls, where every one comes 'in character.'

"I have had infinite amusement at these parties in noticing how industriously every one was playing a part, and acting out of his natural line. There is not a more complete game at cross purposes than the intercourse of the literary and the great. The fine gentleman is always anxious to be thought a wit, and the wit a fine gentleman.

"I have noticed a lord endeavouring to look wise and talk learnedly with a man of letters, who was aiming at a fashionable air, and the tone of a man who had lived about town. The peer quoted a score or two of learned authors, with whom he would fain be thought intimate, while the author talked of Sir John this, and Sir Harry that, and extolled the Burgundy he had drunk at Lord Such-a-one's. Each seemed to forget that he could only be interesting to the other in his proper character. Had the peer been merely a man of erudition, the author would never have listened to his prosing; and had the author known all the nobility in the Court Calendar, it would have given him no interest in the eyes of the peer.

"In the same way I have seen a fine lady, remarkable for beauty, weary a philosopher with flimsy metaphysics, while the philosopher put on an awkward air of gallantry, played with her fan, and prattled about the Opera. I have heard a sentimental poet talk very stupidly with a statesman about the national debt: and on joining a knot of scientific old gentlemen conversing in a corner, expecting to hear the discussion of some valuable discovery, I found they were only amusing themselves with a fat story."

A PRACTICAL PHILOSOPHER.

The anecdotes I had heard of Buckthorne's early schoolmate, together with a variety of peculiarities which I had remarked in himself, gave me a strong curiosity to know something of his own history. I am a traveller of the good old school, and am fond of the custom laid down in books, according to which, whenever travellers met, they sat down forthwith, and gave a history of themselves and their adventures. This Buckthorne, too, was a man much to my taste; he had seen the world, and mingled with society, yet retained the strong eccentricities of a man who had lived much alone. There was a careless dash of good-humour about him which pleased me exceedingly; and at times an odd tinge of melancholy mingled with his humour, and gave it an additional zest. He was apt to run into long speculations upon society and manners, and to indulge in whimsical views of human

nature; yet there was nothing ill-tempered in his satire. It ran more upon the follies than the vices of mankind; and even the follies of his fellow-man were treated with the leniency of one who felt himself to be but frail. He had evidently been a little chilled and buffeted by fortune, without being soured thereby: as some fruits become mellower and more generous in their flavour from having been bruised and frost-bitten.

I have always had a great relish for the conversation of practical philosophers of this stamp, who have profited by the "sweet uses" of adversity without imbibing its bitterness; who have learnt to estimate the world rightly, yet good-humouredly; and who, while they perceive the truth of the saying, that "all is vanity," are yet able to do so without vexation of spirit.

Such a man was Buckthorne. In general a laughing philosopher; and if at any time a shade of sadness stole across his brow, it was but transient; like a summer cloud, which soon goes by, and freshens and revives the fields over which it passes.

I was walking with him one day in Kensington Gardens—for he was a knowing epicure in all the cheap pleasures and rural haunts within reach of the metropolis. It was a delightful warm morning in spring; and he was in the happy mood of a pastoral citizen, when just turned loose into grass and sunshine. He had been watching a lark which, rising from a bed of daisies and yellow-cups, had sung his way up to a bright snowy cloud floating in the deep blue sky.

"Of all birds," said he, "I should like to be a lark. He revels in the brightest time of the day, in the happiest season of the year, among fresh meadows and opening flowers; and when he has sated himself with the sweetness of earth, he wings his flight up to heaven as if he would drink in the melody of the morning stars. Hark to that note! How it comes trilling down upon the ear! What a stream of music, note falling after note in delicious cadence! Who would trouble his head about operas and concerts when he could walk in the fields and hear such music for nothing? These are the enjoyments which set riches at scorn, and make even a poor man independent:

> 'I care not, Fortune, what you do deny:
> You cannot rob me of free nature's grace;
> You cannot shut the windows of the sky,
> Through which Aurora shows her bright'ning face:
> You cannot bar my constant feet to trace
> The woods and lawns by living streams at eve———

"Sir, there are homilies in nature's works worth all the wisdom of the schools, if we could but read them rightly, and one of the pleasantest lessons I ever received in time of trouble, was from hearing the notes of a lark."

I profited by this communicative vein to intimate to Buckthorne a wish to know something of the events of his life, which I fancied must have been an eventful one.

He smiled when I expressed my desire. "I have no great story," said he, "to relate. A mere tissue of errors and follies. But, such as it is, you shall have one epoch of it, by which you may judge of the rest." And so, without any further prelude, he gave me the following anecdotes of his early adventures."

BUCKTHORNE:

OR, THE YOUNG MAN OF GREAT EXPECTATIONS.

I was born to very little property, but to great expectations—which is, perhaps, one of the most unlucky fortunes a man can be born to. My father was a country gentleman, the last of a very ancient and honourable, but decayed family, and resided in an old hunting-lodge in Warwickshire. He was a keen sportsman, and lived to the extent of his moderate income, so that I had little to expect from that quarter; but then I had a rich uncle by the mother's side, a penurious, accumulating curmudgeon, who it was confidently expected would make me his heir, because he was an old bachelor, because I was named after him, and because he hated all the world except myself.

He was, in fact, an inveterate hater, a miser even in misanthropy, and hoarded up a grudge as he did a guinea. Thus, though my mother was an only sister, he had never forgiven her marriage with my father, against whom he had a cold, still, immovable pique, which had lain at the bottom of his heart, like a stone in a well, ever since they had been schoolboys together. My mother, however, considered me as the intermediate being that was to bring everything again into harmony, for she looked upon me as a prodigy—God bless her! my heart overflows whenever I recall her tenderness. She was the most excellent, the most indulgent of mothers. I was her only child: it was a pity she had no more, for she had fondness of heart enough to have spoiled a dozen!

I was sent at an early age to a public school, sorely against my mother's wishes; but my father insisted that it was the only way to make boys hardy. The school was kept by a conscientious prig of the ancient system, who did his duty by the boys intrusted to his care; that is to say, we were flogged soundly when we did not get our lessons. We were put in classes, and thus flogged on in droves along the highways of knowledge, in much the same manner as cattle are driven to market; where those that are heavy in gait, or short in leg, have to suffer for the superior alertness, or longer limbs of their companions.

For my part, I confess it with shame, I was an incorrigible laggard. I have always had the poetical feeling, that is to say, I have always been an idle fellow, and prone to play the vagabond. I used to get away from my books and school whenever I could, and ramble about the fields. I was surrounded by seductions for such a temperament. The schoolhouse was an old-fashioned white-

washed mansion, of wood and plaster, standing on the skirts of a beautiful village; close by it was the venerable church, with a tall Gothic spire; before it spread a lovely green valley, with a little stream glistening along through willow groves; while a line of blue hills bounding the landscape gave rise to many a summer-day-dream as to the fairy land that lay beyond.

In spite of all the scourgings I suffered at that school to make me love my book, I cannot but look back upon the place with fondness. Indeed, I considered this frequent flagellation as the common lot of humanity, and the regular mode in which scholars were made.

My kind mother used to lament over my details of the sore trials I underwent in the cause of learning; but my father turned a deaf ear to her expostulations. He had been flogged through school himself, and swore there was no other way of making a man of parts; though, let me speak it with all due reverence, my father was but an indifferent illustration of his theory, for he was considered a grievous blockhead.

My poetical temperament evinced itself at a very early period. The village church was attended every Sunday by a neighbouring squire, the lord of the manor, whose park stretched quite to the village, and whose spacious country-seat seemed to take the church under its protection. Indeed, you would have thought that the church had been consecrated to him instead of to the Deity. The parish clerk bowed low before him, and the vergers humbled themselves unto the dust in his presence. He always entered a little late, and with some stir; striking his cane emphatically on the ground, swaying his hat in his hand, and looking loftily to the right and left as he walked slowly up the aisle; and the parson, who always ate his Sunday dinner with him, never commenced service until he appeared. He sat with his family in a large pew, gorgeously lined, humbling himself devoutly on velvet cushions, and reading lessons of meekness and lowliness of spirit out of splendid gold and morocco prayer-books. Whenever the parson spoke of the difficulty of a rich man's entering the kingdom of heaven, the eyes of the congregation would turn towards the "grand pew," and I thought the squire seemed pleased with the application.

The pomp of this pew, and the aristocratical air of the family, struck my imagination wonderfully; and I fell desperately in love with a little daughter of the squire's, about twelve years of age. This freak of fancy made me more truant from my studies than ever. I used to stroll abont the squire's park, and lurk near the house, to catch glimpses of this little damsel at the windows, or playing about the lawn, or walking out with her governess.

I had not enterprise nor impudence enough to venture from my concealment. Indeed I felt like an arrant poacher, until I read one or two of Ovid's metamorphoses, when I pictured myself as some sylvan deity, and she a coy wood-nymph of whom I was in pur-

suit. There is something extremely delicious in these early awakenings of the tender passion. I can feel even at this moment the throbbing of my boyish bosom, whenever by chance I caught a glimpse of her white frock fluttering among the shrubbery. I carried about in my bosom a volume of Waller, which I had purloined from my mother's library; and I applied to my little fair one all the accomplishments lavished upon Sacharissa.

At length I danced with her at a school-ball. I was so awkward a booby, that I dared scarcely speak to her; I was filled with awe and embarrassment in her presence; but I was so inspired, that my poetical temperament for the first time broke out in verse, and I fabricated some glowing rhymes, in which I be-rhymed the little lady under the favourite name of Sacharissa. I slipped the verses, trembling, and blushing, into her hand the next Sunday as she came out of church. The little prude handed them to her mamma; the mamma handed them to the squire; the squire, who had no soul for poetry, sent them in dudgeon to the schoolmaster; the schoolmaster, with a barbarity worthy of the dark ages, gave me a sound and peculiarly humiliating flogging for thus trespassing upon Parnassus. This was a sad outset for a votary of the muse; it ought to have cured me of my passion for poetry; but it only confirmed it, for I felt the spirit of a martyr rising within me. What was as well, perhaps, it cured me of my passion for the young lady; for I felt so indignant at the ignominious horsing I had incurred in celebrating her charms, that I could not hold up my head in church. Fortunately for my wounded sensibility, the Midsummer holidays came on, and I returned home. My mother, as usual, inquired into all my school concerns, my little pleasures, and cares, and sorrows; for boyhood has its share of the one as well as of the other. I told her all, and she was indignant at the treatment I had experienced. She fired up at the arrogance of the squire, and the prudery of the daughter; and as to the schoolmaster, she wondered where was the use of having schoolmasters, and why boys could not remain at home, and be educated by tutors, under the eye of their mothers. She asked to see the verses I had written, and she was delighted with them; for, to confess the truth, she had a pretty taste in poetry. She even showed them to the parson's wife, who protested they were charming; and the parson's three daughters insisted on each having a copy of them.

All this was exceedingly balsamic, and I was still more consoled and encouraged, when the young ladies, who were the blue-stockings of the neighbourhood, and had read Dr. Johnson's Lives quite through, assured my mother that great geniuses never studied, but were always idle; upon which I began to surmise that I was myself something out of the common run. My father, however, was of a very different opinion; for when my mother, in the pride of her heart, showed him my copy of verses, he threw them out of the window, asking her "if she meant to make a bal-

lad-monger of the boy?" But he was a careless common-thinking man, and I cannot say that I ever loved him much; my mother absorbed all my filial affection.

I used occasionally, on holidays, to be sent on short visits to the uncle who was to make me his heir; they thought it would keep me in his mind, and render him fond of me. He was a withered, anxious-looking old fellow, and lived in a desolate old country-seat, which he suffered to go to ruin from absolute niggardliness. He kept but one man-servant, who had lived, or rather starved, with him for years, No woman was allowed to sleep in the house. A daughter of the old servant lived by the gate, in what had been a porter's lodge, and was permitted to come into the house about an hour each day, to make the beds, and cook a morsel of provisions. The park that surrounded the house was all run wild; the trees were grown out of shape; the fish-ponds stagnant; the urns and statues fallen from their pedestals, and buried among the rank grass. The hares and pheasants were so little molested, except by poachers, that they bred in great abundance, and sported about the rough lawns and weedy avenues. To guard the premises, and frighten off robbers, of whom he was somewhat apprehensive, and visitors, of whom he was in almost equal awe, my uncle kept two or three bloodhounds, who were always prowling round the house, and were the dread of the neighbouring peasantry. They were gaunt and half starved, seemed ready to devour one from mere hunger, and were an effectual check on any stranger's approach to this wizard castle.

Such was my uncle's house, which I used to visit now and then during the holidays. I was, as I before said, the old man's favourite; that is to say, he did not hate me so much as he did the rest of the world. I had been apprised of his character, and cautioned to cultivate his good will; but I was too young and careless to be a courtier, and, indeed, have never been sufficiently studious of my interests to let them govern my feelings. However, we jogged on very well together, and as my visits cost him almost nothing, they did not seem to be very unwelcome. I brought with me my fishing-rod, and half supplied the table from the fish-ponds.

Our meals were solitary and unsocial. My uncle rarely spoke; he pointed to whatever he wanted, and the servant perfectly understood him. Indeed, his man John, or Iron John, as he was called in the neighbourhood, was a counterpart of his master. He was a tall bony old fellow, with a dry wig, that seemed made of cow's tail, and a face as tough as though it had been made of cow's hide. He was generally clad in a long patched livery coat, taken out of the wardrobe of the house, and which bagged loosely about him, having evidently belonged to some corpulent predecessor, in the more plenteous days of the mansion. From long habits of taciturnity, the hinges of his jaws seemed to have grown absolutely rusty, and it cost him as much effort to set them ajar, and to let

cut a tolerable sentence, as it would have done to set open the iron gates of the park, and let out the old family carriage, that was dropping to pieces in the coach-house.

I cannot say, however, but that I was for some time amused with my uncle's peculiarities. Even the very desolateness of the establishment had something in it that hit my fancy. When the weather was fine, I used to amuse myself in a solitary way, by rambling about the park, and coursing like a colt across its lawns. The hares and pheasants seemed to stare with surprise to see a human being walking these forbidden grounds by daylight. Sometimes I amused myself by jerking stones, or shooting at birds with a bow and arrows, for to have used a gun would have been treason. Now and then my path was crossed by a little red-headed, ragged-tailed urchin, the son of the woman at the lodge, who ran wild about the premises. I tried to draw him into familiarity, and to make a companion of him, but he seemed to have imbibed the strange unsociable character of everything around him, and always kept aloof; so I considered him as another Orson, and amused myself with shooting at him with my bow and arrows, and he would hold up his breeches with one hand, and scamper away like a deer.

There was something in all this loneliness and wildness strangely pleasing to me. The great stables, empty and weather-broken, with the names of favourite horses over the vacant stalls; the windows bricked and boarded up; the broken roofs, garrisoned by rooks and jackdaws, all had a singularly forlorn appearance. One would have concluded the house to be totally uninhabited, were it not for a little thread of blue smoke, which now and then curled up like a corkscrew, from the centre of one of the wide chimneys, where my uncle's starveling meal was cooking.

My uncle's room was in a remote corner of the building, strongly secured, and generally locked. I was never admitted into this strong-hold, where the old man would remain for the greater part of the time, drawn up, like a veteran spider, in the citadel of his web. The rest of the mansion, however, was open to me, and I wandered about it unconstrained. The damp and rain which beat in through the broken windows, crumbled the paper from the walls, mouldered the pictures, and gradually destroyed the furniture. I loved to roam about the wide waste chambers in bad weather, and listen to the howling of the wind, and the banging about of the doors and window-shutters. I pleased myself with the idea how completely, when I came to the estate, I would renovate all things, and make the old building ring with merriment, till it was astonished at its own jocundity.

The chamber which I occupied on these visits had been my mother's when a girl. There was still the toilet-table of her own adorning, the landscapes of her own drawing. She had never seen it since her marriage, but would often ask me, if everything was still the same. All was just the same, for I loved that chamber

on her account, and had taken pains to put everything in order, and to mend all the flaws in the windows with my own hands. I anticipated the time when I should once more welcome her to the house of her fathers, and restore her to this little nestling place of her childhood.

At length my evil genius, or what, perhaps, is the same thing, the Muse, inspired me with the notion of rhyming again. My uncle, who never went to church, used on Sundays to read chapters out of the Bible; and Iron John, the woman from the lodge, and myself, were his congregation. It seemed to be all one to him what he read, so long as it was something from the Bible. Sometimes, therefore, it would be the Song of Solomon, and this withered anatomy would read about being "stayed with flagons, and comforted with apples, for he was sick of love." Sometimes he would hobble, with spectacles on nose, through whole chapters of hard Hebrew names in Deuteronomy, at which the poor woman would sigh and groan, as if wonderfully moved. His favourite, book, however, was "The Pilgrim's Progress;" and when he came to that part which treats of Doubting Castle and Giant Despair, I thought invariably of him and his desolate old country-seat. So much did the idea amuse me, that I took to scribbling about it under the trees in the park; and in a few days had made some progress in a poem, in which I had given a description of the place, under the name of Doubting Castle, and personified my uncle as Giant Despair.

I lost my poem somewhere about the house, and I soon suspected that my uncle had found it, as he harshly intimated to me that I could return home, and that I need not come and see him again till he should send for me.

Just about this time my mother died. I cannot dwell upon the circumstance. My heart, careless and wayward as it is, gushes with the recollection. Her death was an event that perhaps gave a turn to all my after fortunes. With her died all that made home attractive. I had no longer any body whom I was ambitious to please, or fearful to offend. My father was a good kind of man in his way, but he had bad maxims of education, and we differed in material points. It makes a vast difference in opinion about the utility of the rod, which end happens to fall to one's share. I never could be brought into my father's way of thinking on the subject.

I now, therefore, began to grow very impatient of remaining at school, to be flogged for things that I did not like. I longed for variety, especially now that I had not my uncle's house to resort to, by way of diversifying the dulness of school, with the dreariness of his country-seat.

I was now almost seventeen, tall for my age, and full of idle fancies. I had a roving, inextinguishable desire to see different kinds of life, and different orders of society; and this vagrant

humour had been fostered in me by Tom Dribble, the prime wag and great genius of the school, who had all the rambling propensities of a poet.

I used to sit at my desk in the school, on a fine summer's day, and instead of studying the book which lay open before me, my eye was gazing through the windows on the green fields and blue hills. How I envied the happy groups seated on the tops of stage-coaches, chatting, and joking, and laughing, as they were whirled by the schoolhouse on their way to the metropolis! Even the wagoners, trudging along beside their ponderous teams, and traversing the kingdom from one end to the other, were objects of envy to me: I fancied to myself what adventures they must experience, and what odd scenes of life they must witness. All this was, doubtless, the poetical temperament working within me, and tempting me forth into a world of its own creation, which I mistook for the world of real life.

While my mother lived, this strong propensity to rove was counteracted by the stronger attractions of home, and by the powerful ties of affection which drew me to her side; but now that she was gone, the attraction had ceased; the ties were severed. I had no longer an anchorage-ground for my heart, but was at the mercy of every vagrant impulse. Nothing but the narrow allowance on which my father kept me, and the consequent penury of my purse, prevented me from mounting the top of a stage-coach, and launching myself adrift on the great ocean of life.

Just about this time the village was agitated for a day or two, by the passing through of several caravans, containing wild beasts, and other spectacles, for a great fair annually held at a neighbouring town.

I had never seen a fair of any consequence, and my curiosity was powerfully awakened by this bustle of preparation. I gazed with respect and wonder at the vagrant personages who accompanied these caravans. I loitered about the village inn, listening with curiosity and delight to the slang talk and cant jokes of the showmen and their followers; and I felt an eager desire to witness this fair, which my fancy decked out as something wonderfully fine.

A holiday afternoon presented, when I could be absent from noon until evening. A wagon was going from the village to the fair; I could not resist the temptation, nor the eloquence of Tom Dribble, who was a truant to the very heart's core. We hired seats, and set off full of boyish expectation. I promised myself that I would but take a peep at the land of promise, and hasten back again before my absence should be noticed.

Heavens! how happy I was on arriving at the fair! How I was enchanted with the world of fun and pageantry around me! The humours of Punch, the feats of the equestrians, the magical tricks of the conjurors! But what principally caught my atten-

tion was an itinerant theatre, where a tragedy, pantomime, and farce, were all acted in the course of half an hour; and more of the dramatis personæ murdered, than at either Drury Lane or Covent Garden in the course of a whole evening. I have since seen many a play performed by the best actors in the world, but never have I derived half the delight from any that I did from this first representation.

There was a ferocious tyrant in a skullcap like an inverted porringer, and a dress of red baize magnificently embroidered with gilt leather; with his face so bewhiskered, and his eyebrows so knit and expanded with burnt cork, that he made my heart quake within me, as he stamped about the little stage. I was enraptured too with the surpassing beauty of a distressed damsel in faded pink silk, and dirty white muslin, whom he held in cruel captivity by way of gaining her affections, and who wept, and wrung her hands, and flourished a ragged white handkerchief from the top of an impregnable tower of the size of a bandbox.

Even after I had come out from the play, I could not tear myself from the vicinity of the theatre, but lingered, gazing, and wondering, and laughing at the dramatis personæ as they performed their antics, or danced upon a stage in front of the booth, to decoy a new set of spectators.

I was so bewildered by the scene, and so lost in the crowd of sensations that kept swarming upon me, that I was like one entranced. I lost my companion, Tom Dribble, in a tumult and scuffle that took place near one of the shows; but I was too much occupied in mind to think long about him. I strolled about until dark, when the fair was lighted up, and a new scene of magic opened upon me. The illumination of the tents and booths, the brilliant effect of the stages decorated with lamps, with dramatic groups flaunting about them in gaudy dresses, contrasted splendidly with the surrounding darkness; while the uproar of drums, trumpets, fiddles, hautboys, and cymbals, mingled with the harangues of the showmen, the squeaking of Punch, and the shouts and laughter of the crowd, all united to complete my giddy distraction.

Time flew without my perceiving it. When I came to myself and thought of the school, I hastened to return. I inquired for the wagon in which I had come: it had been gone for hours! I asked the time: it was almost midnight! A sudden quaking seized me. How was I to get back to school? I was too weary to make the journey on foot, and I knew not where to apply for a conveyance. Even if I should find one, could I venture to disturb the school-house long after midnight—to arouse that sleeping lion the usher in the very midst of his night's rest?—the idea was too dreadful for a delinquent schoolboy. All the horrors of return rushed upon me. My absence must long before this have been remarked;—and absent for a whole night!—a deed of darkness not easily to be expiated. The rod of the pedagogue budded forth into

tenfold terrors before my affrighted fancy. I pictured to myself punishment and humiliation in every variety of form, and my heart sickened at the picture. Alas! how often are the petty ills of boyhood as painful to our tender natures, as are the sterner evils of manhood to our robuster minds.

I wandered about among the booths, and I might have derived a lesson from my actual feelings, how much the charms of this world depend upon ourselves; for I no longer saw anything gay or delightful in the revelry around me. At length I lay down, wearied and perplexed, behind one of the large tents, and, covering myself with the margin of the tent cloth, to keep off the night chill, I soon fell asleep.

I had not slept long, when I was awakened by the noise of merriment within an adjoining booth. It was the itinerant theatre, rudely constructed of boards and canvas. I peeped through an aperture, and saw the whole dramatis personæ, tragedy, comedy, and pantomime, all refreshing themselves after the final dismissal of their auditors. They were merry and gamesome, and made the flimsy theatre ring with their laughter. I was astonished to see the tragedy tyrant in red baize and fierce whiskers, who had made my heart quake as he strutted about the boards, now transformed into a fat, good-humoured fellow; the beaming porringer laid aside from his brow, and his jolly face washed from all the terrors of burnt cork. I was delighted, too, to see the distressed damsel, in faded silk and dirty muslin, who had trembled under his tyranny, and afflicted me so much by her sorrows, now seated familiarly on his knee, and quaffing from the same tankard. Harlequin lay asleep on one of the benches; and monks, satyrs, and vestal virgins, were grouped together, laughing outrageously at a broad story told by an unhappy count, who had been barbarously murdered in the tragedy.

This was, indeed, novelty to me. It was a peep into another planet. I gazed and listened with intense curiosity and enjoyment. They had a thousand odd stories and jokes about the events of the day, and burlesque descriptions and mimickings of the spectators who had been admiring them. Their conversation was full of allusions to their adventures at different places where they had exhibited; the characters they had met with in different villages; and the ludicrous difficulties in which they had occasionally been involved. All past cares and troubles were now turned by these thoughtless beings into matter of merriment, and made to contribute to the gaiety of the moment. They had been moving from fair to fair about the kingdom, and were the next morning to set out on their way to London. My resolution was taken. I stole from my nest, and crept through a hedge into a neighbouring field, where I went to work to make a tatterdemalion of myself. I tore my clothes; soiled them with dirt; begrimed my face and hands, and crawling near one of the booths, purloined an old hat, and left

my new one in its place. It was an honest theft, and I hope may not hereafter rise up in judgment against me.

I now ventured to the scene of merry-making, and presenting myself before the dramatic corps, offered myself as a volunteer. I felt terribly agitated and abashed, for never before "stood I in such a presence." I had addressed myself to the manager of the company. He was a fat man, dressed in dirty white, with a red sash, fringed with tinsel, swathed round his body; his face was smeared with paint, and a majestic plume towered from an old spangled black bonnet. He was the Jupiter Tonans of this Olympus, and was surrounded by the inferior gods and goddesses of his court. He sat on the end of a bench, by a table, with one arm akimbo, and the other extended to the handle of a tankard, which he had slowly set down from his lips, as he surveyed me from head to foot. It was a moment of awful scrutiny; and I fancied the groups around all watching as in silent suspense, and waiting for the imperial nod.

He questioned me as to who I was; what were my qualifications; and what terms I expected. I passed myself off for a discharged servant from a gentleman's family; and as, happily, one does not require a special recommendation to get admitted into bad company, the questions on that head were easily satisfied. As to my accomplishments, I could spout a little poetry, and knew several scenes of plays, which I had learnt at school exhibitions; I could dance ——. That was enough. No further questions were asked me as to accomplishments; it was the very thing they wanted; and as I asked no wages, but merely meat and drink, and safe conduct about the world, a bargain was struck in a moment.

Behold me, therefore, transformed on a sudden from a gentleman student to a dancing buffoon; for such, in fact, was the character in which I made my debut. I was one of those who formed the groups in the dramas, and was principally employed on the stage in front of the booth to attract company. I was equipped as a satyr, in a dress of drab frieze that fitted to my shape, with a great laughing mask, ornamented with huge ears and short horns. I was pleased with the disguise, because it kept me from the danger of being discovered, whilst we were in that part of the country; and as I had merely to dance and make antics, the character was favourable to a debutant—being almost on a par with Simon Smug's part of the lion, which required nothing but roaring.

I cannot tell you how happy I was at this sudden change in my situation. I felt no degradation, for I had seen too little of society to be thoughtful about the difference of rank; and a boy of sixteen is seldom aristocratical. I had given up no friend, for there seemed to be no one in the world that cared for me now that my poor mother was dead; I had given up no pleasure, for my pleasure was to ramble about and indulge the flow of a poetical imagination, and I now enjoyed it in perfection. There is no life so truly poetical as that of a dancing buffoon.

It may be said that all this argued grovelling inclinations. I do not think so. Not that I mean to vindicate myself in any great degree: I know too well what a whimsical compound I am. But in this instance I was seduced by no love of low company, nor disposition to indulge in low vices. I have always despised the brutally vulgar, and had a disgust at vice, whether in high or low life. I was governed merely by a sudden and thoughtless impulse. I had no idea of resorting to this profession as a mode of life, or of attaching myself to these people, as my future class of society. I thought merely of a temporary gratification to my curiosity, and an indulgence of my humours. I had already a strong relish for the peculiarities of character and the varieties of situation, and I have always been fond of the comedy of life, and desirous of seeing it through all its shifting scenes.

In mingling, therefore, among mountebanks and buffoons, I was protected by the very vivacity of imagination which had led me among them; I moved about, enveloped, as it were, in a protecting delusion, which my fancy spread around me. I assimilated to these people only as they struck me poetically; their whimsical ways and a certain picturesqueness in their mode of life entertained me; but I was neither amused nor corrupted by their vices. In short, I mingled among them, as Prince Hal did among his graceless associates, merely to gratify my humour.

I did not investigate my motives in this manner, at the time, for I was too careless and thoughtless to reason about the matter; but I do so now, when I look back with trembling to think of the ordeal to which I unthinkingly exposed myself, and the manner in which I passed through it. Nothing, I am convinced, but the poetical temperament, that hurried me into the scrape, brought me out of it without my becoming an arrant vagabond.

Full of the enjoyment of the moment, giddy with the wildness of animal spirits, so rapturous in a boy, I capered, I danced, I played a thousand fantastic tricks about the stage, in the villages in which we exhibited; and I was universally pronounced the most agreeable monster that had ever been seen in those parts. My disappearance from school had awakened my father's anxiety; for I one day heard a description of myself cried before the very booth in which I was exhibiting, with the offer of a reward for any intelligence of me. I had no great scruple about letting my father suffer a little uneasiness on my account; it would punish him for past indifference, and would make him value me the more when he found me again.

I have wondered that some of my comrades did not recognise me in the stray sheep that was cried; but they were all, no doubt, occupied by their own concerns. They were all labouring seriously in their antic vocation; for folly was a mere trade with most of them, and they often grinned and capered with heavy hearts. With me, on the contrary, it was all real. I acted *con amore*, and rattled

and laughed from the irrepressible gaiety of my spirits. It is true that, now and then, I started and looked grave on receiving a sudden thwack from the wooden sword of Harlequin in the course of my gambols, as it brought to mind the birch of my schoolmaster. But I soon got accustomed to it, and bore all the cuffing, and kicking, and tumbling about, which form the practical wit of your itinerant pantomime, with a good humour that made me a prodigious favourite.

The country campaign of the troop was soon at an end, and we set off for the metropolis, to perform at the fairs which are held in its vicinity. The greater part of our theatrical property was sent on direct, to be in a state of preparation for the opening of the fairs; while a detachment of the company travelled slowly on, foraging among the villages. I was amused with the desultory, hap-hazard kind of life we led; here to-day and gone to-morrow. Sometimes revelling in ale-houses, sometimes feasting under hedges in the green fields. When audiences were crowded and business profitable, we fared well; and when otherwise, we fared scantily, consoled ourselves, and made up with anticipations of the next day's success.

At length the increasing frequency of coaches hurrying past us, covered with passengers; the increasing number of carriages, carts, wagons, gigs, droves of cattle and flocks of sheep, all thronging the road; the snug country boxes with trim flower-gardens, twelve feet square, and their trees twelve feet high, all powdered with dust, and the innumerable seminaries for young ladies and gentlemen situated along the road for the benefit of country air and rural retirement; all these insignia announced that the mighty London was at hand. The hurry, and the crowd, and the bustle, and the noise, and the dust, increased as we proceeded, until I saw the great cloud of smoke hanging in the air, like a canopy of state over this queen of cities.

In this way, then, did I enter the metropolis a strolling vagabond, on the top of a caravan, with a crew of vagabonds about me; but I was as happy as a prince; for, like Prince Hal, I felt myself superior to my situation, and knew that I could at any time cast it off, and emerge into my proper sphere.

How my eyes sparkled as we passed Hyde Park Corner, and I saw splendid equipages rolling by; with powdered footmen behind, in rich liveries, with fine nosegays, and gold-headed canes; and with lovely women within, so sumptuously dressed, and so surpassingly fair! I was always extremely sensible to female beauty, and here I saw it in all its powers of fascination: for whatever may be said of "beauty unadorned," there is something almost awful in female loveliness decked out in jewelled state. The swan-like neck encircled with diamonds; the raven locks clustered with pearls; the ruby glowing on the snowy bosom, are objects which I could never contemplate without emotion; and a dazzling white

arm clasped with bracelets, and taper, transparent fingers, laden with sparkling rings, are to me irresistible.

My very eyes ached as I gazed at the high and courtly beauty before me. It surpassed all that my imagination had conceived of the sex. I shrank, for a moment, into shame at the company in which I was placed, and repined at the vast distance that seemed to intervene between me and these magnificent beings.

I forbear to give a detail of the happy life I led about the skirts of the metropolis, playing at the various fairs held there during the latter part of the spring, and beginning of summer. This continued change from place to place, and scene to scene, fed my imagination with novelties, and kept my spirits in a perpetual state of excitement. As I was tall of my age, I aspired, at one time, to play heroes in tragedy; but after two or three trials, I was pronounced by the manager totally unfit for the line; and our first tragic actress, who was a large woman, and held a small hero in abhorrence, confirmed his decision.

The fact is, I had attempted to give point to language which had no point, and nature to scenes which had no nature. They said I did not fill out my characters; and they were right. The characters had all been prepared for a different sort of man. Our tragedy hero was a round, robustious fellow, with an amazing voice; who stamped and slapped his breast until his wig shook again; and who roared and bellowed out his bombast until every phrase swelled upon the ear like the sound of a kettle-drum. I might as well have attempted to fill out his clothes as his characters. When we had a dialogue together, I was nothing before him, with my slender voice and discriminating manner. I might as well have attempted to parry a cudgel with a small-sword. If he found me in any way gaining ground upon him, he would take refuge in his mighty voice, and throw his tones like peals of thunder at me, until they were drowned in the still louder thunders of applause from the audience.

To tell the truth, I suspect that I was not shown fair play, and that there was management at the bottom; for, without vanity, I think I was a better actor than he. As I had not embarked in the vagabond line through ambition, I did not repine at lack of preferment; but I was grieved to find that a vagrant life was not without its cares and anxieties; and that jealousies, intrigues, and mad ambition, were to be found even among vagabonds.

Indeed, as I became more familiar with my situation, and the delusions of fancy gradually faded away, I began to find that my associates were not the happy careless creatures I had at first imagined them. They were jealous of each other's talents; they quarrelled about parts, the same as the actors on the grand theatres; they quarrelled about dresses; and there was one robe of yellow silk, trimmed with red, and a head-dress of three rumpled ostrich-feathers, which were continually setting the ladies of the

company by the ears. Even those who had attained the highest honours were not more happy than the rest; for Mr. Flimsey himself, our first tragedian, and apparently a jovial good-humoured fellow, confessed to me one day, in the fulness of his heart, that he was a miserable man. He had a brother-in-law, a relative by marriage, though not by blood, who was manager of a theatre in a small country town. And this same brother ("a little more than kin, but less than kind") looked down upon him, and treated him with contumely, because, forsooth, he was but a strolling player. I tried to console him with the thoughts of the vast applause he daily received, but it was all in vain. He declared that it gave him no delight, and that he should never be a happy man, until the name of Flimsey rivalled the name of Crimp.

How little do those before the scenes know of what passes behind! how little can they judge, from the countenances of actors, of what is passing in their hearts! I have known two lovers quarrel like cats behind the scenes, who were, the moment after, to fly into each other's embraces. And I have dreaded, when our Belvidera was to take her farewell kiss of her Jaffier, lest she should bite a piece out of his cheek. Our tragedian was a rough joker off the stage; our prime clown, the most peevish mortal living. The latter used to go about snapping and snarling, with a broad laugh painted on his countenance; and I can assure you, that whatever may be said of the gravity of a monkey, or the melancholy of a gibed cat, there is no more melancholy creature in existence than a mountebank off duty.

The only thing in which all parties agreed, was to backbite the manager, and cabal against his regulations. This, however, I have since discovered to be a common trait of human nature, and to take place in all communities. It would seem to be the main business of man to repine at government. In all situations of life into which I have looked, I have found mankind divided into two grand parties: those who ride, and those who are ridden. The great struggle of life seems to be which shall keep in the saddle. This, it appears to me, is the fundamental principle of politics, whether in great or little life. However, I do not mean to moralize—but one cannot always sink the philosopher.

Well, then, to return to myself, it was determined, as I said, that I was not fit for tragedy, and, unluckily, as my study was bad, having a very poor memory, I was pronounced unfit for comedy also; besides, the line of young gentlemen was already engrossed by an actor with whom I could not pretend to enter into competition, he having filled it for almost half a century. I came down again, therefore, to pantomime. In consequence, however, of the good offices of the manager's lady, who had taken a liking to me, I was promoted from the part of the satyr to that of the lover; and with my face patched and painted, a huge cravat of paper, a steeple-crowned hat, and dangling long-skirted sky-blue coat, was

metamorphosed into the lover of Columbine. My part did not call for much of the tender and sentimental. I had merely to pursue the fugitive fair one; to have a door now and then slammed in my face; to run my head occasionally against a post; to tumble and roll about with Pantaloon and the Clown; and to endure the hearty thwacks of Harlequin's wooden sword.

As ill luck would have it, my poetical temperament began to ferment within me, and to work out new troubles. The inflammatory air of a great metropolis, added to the rural scenes in which the fairs were held, such as Greenwich Park, Epping Forest, and the lovely valley of the West End, had a powerful effect upon me. While in Greenwich Park, I was witness to the old holiday games of running down hill, and kissing in the ring; and then the firmament of blooming faces and blue eyes that would be turned towards me, as I was playing antics on the stage: all these set my young blood and my poetical vein in full flow. In short, I played the character to the life, and became desperately enamoured of Columbine. She was a trim, well-made, tempting girl, with a roguish dimpling face, and fine chestnut hair clustering all about it. The moment I got fairly smitten, there was an end to all playing. I was such a creature of fancy and feeling, that I could not put on a pretended, when I was powerfully affected by a real emotion. I could not sport with a fiction that came so near to the fact. I became too natural in my acting to succeed. And then, what a situation for a lover! I was a mere stripling, and she played with my passion; for girls soon grow more adroit and knowing in these matters than your awkward youngsters. What agonies had I to suffer! Every time that she danced in front of the booth, and made such liberal displays of her charms, I was in torment. To complete my misery, I had a real rival in Harlequin, an active, vigorous, knowing varlet of six-and-twenty. What had a raw, inexperienced youngster like me to hope from such a competition?

I had still, however, some advantages in my favour. In spite of my change of life, I retained that indescribable something which always distinguishes the gentleman; that something which dwells in a man's air and deportment, and not in his clothes; and which is as difficult for a gentleman to put off, as for a vulgar fellow to put on. The company generally felt it, and used to call me Little Gentleman Jack. The girl felt it too, and, in spite of her predilection for my powerful rival, she liked to flirt with me. This only aggravated my troubles, by increasing my passion, and awakening the jealousy of her party-coloured lover.

Alas! think what I suffered at being obliged to keep up an ineffectual chase after my Columbine through whole pantomimes; to see her carried off in the vigorous arms of the happy Harlequin; and to be obliged, instead of snatching her from him, to tumble sprawling with Pantaloon and the Clown, and bear the infernal and degrading thwacks of my rival's weapon of lath, which, may

heaven confound him! (excuse my passion,) the villain laid on with a malicious good-will: nay, I could absolutely hear him chuckle and laugh beneath his accursed mask—I beg pardon for growing a little warm in my narrative—I wish to be cool, but these recollections will sometimes agitate me. I have heard and read of many desperate and deplorable situations of lovers, but none, I think, in which true love was ever exposed to so severe and peculiar a trial.

This could not last long; flesh and blood, at least such flesh and blood as mine, could not bear it. I had repeated heart-burnings and quarrels with my rival, in which he treated me with the mortifying forbearance of a man towards a child. Had he quarrelled outright with me, I could have stomached it; at least I should have known what part to take; but to be humoured and treated as a child in the presence of my mistress, when I felt all the bantam spirit of a little man swelling within me — Gods! it was insufferable!

At length, we were exhibiting one day at West End fair, which was at that time a very fashionable resort, and often beleaguered with gay equipages from town. Among the spectators that filled the first row of our little canvas theatre one afternoon, when I had to figure in a pantomime, were a number of young ladies from a boarding-school, with their governess. Guess my confusion, when, in the midst of my antics, I beheld among the number my quondam flame; her whom I had berhymed at school, her for whose charms I had smarted so severely, the cruel Sacharissa! What was worse, I fancied she recollected me, and was repeating the story of my humiliating flagellation, for I saw her whispering to her companions and her governess. I lost all consciousness of the part I was acting, and of the place where I was. I felt shrunk to nothing, and could have crept into a rat-hole—unluckily, none was open to receive me. Before I could recover from my confusion, I was tumbled over by Pantaloon and the clown, and I felt the sword of Harlequin making vigorous assaults in a manner most degrading to my dignity.

Heaven and earth! was I again to suffer martyrdom in this ignominious manner, in the knowledge and even before the very eyes of this most beautiful, but most disdainful of fair ones? All my long-smothered wrath broke out at once; the dormant feelings of the gentleman arose within me. Stung to the quick by intolerable mortification, I sprang on my feet in an instant; leaped upon Harlequin like a young tiger; tore off his mask; buffeted him in the face; and soon shed more blood on the stage than had been spilt upon it during a whole tragic campaign of battles and murders.

As soon as Harlequin recovered from his surprise, he returned my assault with interest. I was nothing in his hands. I was game, to be sure, for I was a gentleman; but he had the clownish advantage of bone and muscle. I felt as if I could have fough

even unto the death; and I was likely to do so, for he was, according to the boxing phrase, "putting my head into chancery," when the gentle Columbine flew to my assistance. God bless the women! they are always on the side of the weak and the oppressed!

The battle now became general; the dramatis personæ ranged on either side. The manager interposed in vain; in vain were his spangled black bonnet and towering white feathers seen whisking about, and nodding, and bobbing in the midst of the fight. Warriors, ladies, priests, satyrs, kings, queens, gods, and goddesses, all joined pell-mell in the affray; never, since the conflict under the walls of Troy, had there been such a chance-medley warfare of combatants, human and divine. The audience applauded, the ladies shrieked, and fled from the theatre; and a scene of discord ensued that baffles all description.

Nothing but the interference of the peace-officers restored some degree of order. The havoc, however, among dresses and decorations, put an end to all further acting for that day. The battle over, the next thing was to inquire why it was begun; a common question among politicians after a bloody and unprofitable war, and one not always easy to be answered. It was soon traced to me, and my unaccountable transport of passion, which they could only attribute to my having *run a muck*. The manager was judge and jury, and plaintiff into the bargain; and in such cases justice is always speedily administered. He came out of the fight as sublime a wreck as the Santissima Trinidada. His gallant plumes, which once towered aloft, were drooping about his ears; his robe of state hung in ribands from his back, and but ill concealed the ravages he had suffered in the rear. He had received kicks and cuffs from all sides during the tumult; for every one took the opportunity of slyly gratifying some lurking grudge on his fat carcass. He was a discreet man, and did not choose to declare war with all his company, so he swore all those kicks and cuffs had been given by me, and I let him enjoy the opinion. Some wounds he bore, however, which wore the incontestable traces of a woman's warfare: his sleek rosy cheek was scored by trickling furrows, which were ascribed to the nails of my intrepid and devoted Columbine. The ire of the monarch was not to be appeased; he had suffered in his person, and he had suffered in his purse; his dignity, too, had been insulted, and that went for something; for dignity is always more irascible, the more petty the potentate. He wreaked his wrath upon the beginners of the affray, and Columbine and myself were discharged, at once, from the company.

Figure me, then, to yourself, a stripling of little more than sixteen, a gentleman by birth, a vagabond by trade, turned adrift upon the world, making the best of my way through the crowd of West End fair; my mountebank dress fluttering in rags about me; the weeping Columbine hanging upon my arm, in splendid but tattered finery; the tears coursing one by one down her face,

carrying off the red paint in torrents, and literally "preying upon her damask cheek."

The crowd made way for us as we passed, and hooted in our rear. I felt the ridicule of my situation, but had too much gallantry to desert this fair one, who had sacrificed every thing for me. Having wandered through the fair, we emerged, like another Adam and Eve, into unknown regions, and "had the world before us, where to choose." Never was a more disconsolate pair seen in the soft valley of West End. The luckless Columbine cast many a lingering look at the fair, which seemed to put on a more than usual splendour: its tents, and booths, and party-coloured groups, all brightening in the sunshine, and gleaming among the trees; and its gay flags and streamers fluttering in the light summer airs. With a heavy sigh she would lean on my arm and proceed. I had no hope nor consolation to give her; but she had linked herself to my fortunes, and she was too much of a woman to desert me.

Pensive and silent, then, we traversed the beautiful fields which lie behind Hampstead, and wandered on, until the fiddle, and the hautboy, and the shout, and the laugh, were swallowed up in the deep sound of the big bass-drum, and even that died away into a distant rumble. We passed along the pleasant, sequestered walk of Nightingale-lane. For a pair of lovers, what scene could be more propitious?—But such a pair of lovers! Not a nightingale sang to soothe us: the very gipsies, who were encamped there during the fair, made no offer to tell the fortunes of such an ill-omened couple, whose fortunes, I suppose, they thought too legibly written to need an interpreter; and the gipsy children crawled into their cabins, and peeped out fearfully at us as we went by. For a moment I paused, and was almost tempted to turn gipsy, but the poetical feeling, for the present, was fully satisfied, and I passed on. Thus we travelled and travelled, like a prince and princess in a nursery tale, until we had traversed a part of Hampstead Heath, and arrived in the vicinity of Jack Straw's Castle. Here, wearied and dispirited, we seated ourselves on the margin of the hill, hard by the very milestone where Whittington of yore heard the Bow-bells ring out the presage of his future greatness. Alas! no bell rung an invitation to us, as we looked disconsolately upon the distant city. Old London seemed to wrap itself unsociably in its mantle of brown smoke, and to offer no encouragement to such a couple of tatterdemalions.

For once, at least, the usual course of the pantomime was reversed, Harlequin was jilted, and the lover had carried off Columbine in good earnest. But what was I to do with her? I could not take her in my hand, return to my father, throw myself on my knees, and crave his forgiveness and blessing according to dramatic usage. The very dogs would have chased such a draggled-tailed beauty from the grounds.

In the midst of my doleful dumps, some one tapped me on the shoulder, and, looking up, I saw a couple of rough sturdy fellows standing behind me. Not knowing what to expect, I jumped on my legs, and was preparing again to make battle, but was tripped up and secured in a twinkling.

"Come, come, young master," said one of the fellows, in a gruff but good-humoured tone, "don't let's have any of your tantrums; one would have thought you had had swing enough for this bout. Come; it's high time to leave off harlequinading, and go home to your father."

In fact, I had fallen into the hands of remorseless men. The cruel Sacharissa had proclaimed who I was, and that a reward had been offered throughout the country for any tidings of me; and they had seen a description of me which had been inserted in the public papers. Those harpies, therefore, for the mere sake of filthy lucre, were resolved to deliver me over into the hands of my father, and the clutches of my pedagogue.

In vain I swore I would not leave my faithful and afflicted Columbine. In vain I tore myself from their grasp, and flew to her; and vowed to protect her; and wiped the tears from her cheek, and with them a whole blush that might have vied with the carnation for brilliancy. My persecutors were inflexible; they even seemed to exult in our distress; and to enjoy this theatrical display of dirt, and finery, and tribulation. I was carried off in despair, leaving my Columbine destitute in the wide world; but many a look of agony did I cast back at her as she stood gazing piteously after me from the brink of Hampstead Hill; so forlorn, so fine, so ragged, so bedraggled, yet so beautiful.

Thus ended my first peep into the world. I returned home, rich in good-for-nothing experience, and dreading the reward I was to receive for my improvement. My reception, however, was quite different from what I had expected. My father had a spice of the devil in him, and did not seem to like me the worse for my freak, which he termed "sowing my wild oats." He happened to have some of his sporting friends to dine the very day of my return; they made me tell some of my adventures, and laughed heartily at them.

One old fellow, with an outrageously red nose, took to me hugely. I heard him whisper to my father that I was a lad of mettle, and might make something clever; to which my father replied, that I had good points, but was an ill-broken whelp, and required a great deal of the whip. Perhaps this very conversation raised me a little in his esteem, for I found the red-nosed old gentleman was a veteran fox-hunter of the neighbourhood, for whose opinion my father had a vast deference. Indeed, I believe he would have pardoned any thing in me more readily than poetry, which he called a cursed, sneaking, puling, housekeeping employment, the bane of all fine manhood. He swore it was unworthy

of a youngster of my expectations, who was one day to have so great an estate, and would be able to keep horses and hounds, and hire poets to write songs for him into the bargain.

I had now satisfied, for a time, my roving propensity. I had exhausted the poetical feeling. I had been heartily buffeted out of my love for theatrical display. I felt humiliated by my exposure, and willing to hide my head anywhere for a season, so that I might be out of the way of the ridicule of the world; for I found folks not altogether so indulgent abroad as they were at my father's table. I could not stay at home; the house was intolerably doleful now that my mother was no longer there to cherish me. Every thing around spoke mournfully of her. The little flower-garden in which she delighted was all in disorder and overrun with weeds. I attempted for a day or two to arrange it, but my heart grew heavier and heavier as I laboured. Every little broken-down flower, that I had seen her rear so tenderly, seemed to plead in mute eloquence to my feelings. There was a favourite honeysuckle which I had often seen her training with assiduity, and had heard her say it would be the pride of her garden. I found it grovelling along the ground, tangled and wild, and twining round every worthless weed; and it struck me as an emblem of myself, a mere scatterling, running to waste and uselessness. I could work no longer in the garden.

My father sent me to pay a visit to my uncle, by way of keeping the old gentleman in mind of me. I was received, as usual, without any expression of discontent, which we always considered equivalent to a hearty welcome. Whether he had ever heard of my strolling freak or not, I could not discover, he and his man were both so taciturn. I spent a day or two roaming about the dreary mansion and neglected park, and felt at one time, I believe, a touch of poetry, for I was tempted to drown myself in a fish-pond; I rebuked the evil spirit, however, and it left me. I found the same red-headed boy running wild about the park, but I felt in no humour to hunt him at present. On the contrary, I tried to coax him to me, and to make friends with him; but the young savage was untamable.

When I returned from my uncle's, I remained at home for some time, for my father was disposed, he said, to make a man of me. He took me out hunting with him, and I became a great favourite of the red-nosed squire, because I rode at everything, never refused the boldest leap, and was always sure to be in at the death. I used often, however, to offend my father at hunting-dinners, by taking the wrong side in politics. My father was amazingly ignorant, so ignorant, in fact, as not to know that he knew nothing. He was staunch, however, to church and king, and full of old-fashioned prejudices. Now I had picked up a little knowledge in politics and religion during my rambles with the strollers, and found myself capable of setting him right as to many of his antiquated

notions. I felt it my duty to do so; we were apt, therefore, to differ occasionally in the political discussions which sometimes arose at those hunting-dinners.

I was at that age when a man knows least, and is most vain of his knowledge, and when he is extremely tenacious in defending his opinion upon subjects about which he knows nothing. My father was a hard man for any one to argue with, for he never knew when he was refuted. I sometimes posed him a little, but then he had one argument that always settled the question; he would threaten to knock me down. I believe he at last grew tired of me, because I both outtalked and outrode him. The red-nosed squire, too, got out of conceit with me, because in the heat of the chase, I rode over him one day as he and his horse lay sprawling in the dirt: so I found myself getting into disgrace with all the world, and would have got heartily out of humour with myself, had I not been kept in tolerable self-conceit by the parson's three daughters.

They were the same who had admired my poetry on a former occasion, when it had brought me into disgrace at school; and I had ever since retained an exalted idea of their judgment. Indeed, they were young ladies not merely of taste but of science. Their education had been superintended by their mother, who was a blue-stocking. They knew enough of botany to tell the technical names of all the flowers in the garden, and all their secret concerns into the bargain. They knew music too, not mere common-place music, but Rossini and Mozart, and they sang Moore's Irish Melodies to perfection. They had pretty little work-tables, covered with all kinds of objects of taste; specimens of lava, and painted eggs, and work-boxes, painted and varnished by themselves. They excelled in knotting and netting, and painted in water-colours; and made feather fans, and fire-screens, and worked in silks and worsteds; and talked French and Italian, and knew Shakspeare by heart. They even knew something of geology and mineralogy; and went about the neighbourhood knocking stones to pieces, to the great admiration and perplexity of the country folk.

I am a little too minute, perhaps, in detailing their accomplishments, but I wish to let you see that these were not common-place young ladies, but had pretensions quite above the ordinary run. It was some consolation to me, therefore, to find favour in such eyes. Indeed, they had always marked me out for a genius, and considered my late vagrant freak as fresh proof of the fact. They observed that Shakspeare himself had been a mere pickle in his youth; that he had stolen a deer, as every one knew, and kept loose company, and consorted with actors: so I comforted myself marvellously with the idea of having so decided a Shakspearian trait in my character.

The youngest of the three, however, was my grand consolation. She was a pale, sentimental girl, with long "hyacinthine" ringlets

hanging about her face. She wrote poetry herself, and we kept up a poetical correspondence. She had a taste for the drama, too, and I taught her how to act several of the scenes in Romeo and Juliet. I used to rehearse the garden scene under her lattice, which looked out from among woodbine and honeysuckles into the churchyard. I began to think her amazingly pretty as well as clever, and I believe I should have finished by falling in love with her, had not her father discovered our theatrical studies. He was a studious, abstracted man, generally too much absorbed in his learned and religious labours to notice the little foibles of his daughters, and perhaps blinded by a father's fondness; but he unexpectedly put his head out of his study-window one day in the midst of a scene, and put a stop to our rehearsals. He had a vast deal of that prosaic good sense which I for ever found a stumbling-block in my poetical path. My rambling freak had not struck the good man as poetically as it had his daughters. He drew his comparison from a different manual. He looked upon me as a prodigal son, and doubted whether I should ever arrive at the happy catastrophe of the fatted calf.

I fancy some intimation was given to my father of this new breaking out of my poetical temperament, for he suddenly intimated that it was high time I should prepare for the university. I dreaded a return to the school whence I had eloped: the ridicule of my fellow-scholars, and the glance from the squire's pew, would have been worse than death to me. I was fortunately spared the humiliation. My father sent me to board with a country clergyman, who had three or four boys under his care. I went to him joyfully, for I had often heard my mother mention him with esteem. In fact he had been an admirer of hers in his younger days, though too humble in fortune and modest in pretensions to aspire to her hand; but he had ever retained a tender regard for her. He was a good man; a worthy specimen of that valuable body of our country clergy who silently and unostentatiously do a vast deal of good; who are, as it were, woven into the whole system of rural life, and operate upon it with a steady yet unobtrusive influence of temperate piety and learned good sense. He lived in a small village not far from Warwick, one of those little communities where the scanty flock is, in a manner, folded into the bosom of the pastor. The venerable church, in its grass-grown cemetery, was one of those rural temples scattered about our country as if to sanctify the land.

I have the worthy pastor before my mind's eye at this moment, with his mild benevolent countenance, rendered still more venerable by his silver hairs. I have him before me, as I saw him on my arrival, seated in the embowered porch of his small parsonage, with a flower-garden before it, and his pupils gathered round him like his children. I shall never forget his reception of me, for I believe he thought of my poor mother at the time, and his heart

yearned towards her child. His eye glistened when he received me at the door, and he took me into his arms as the adopted child of his affections. Never had I been so fortunately placed. He was one of those excellent members of our church, who help out their narrow salaries by instructing a few gentlemen's sons. I am convinced those little seminaries are among the best nurseries of talent and virtue in the land. Both heart and mind are cultivated and improved. The preceptor is the companiom and the friend of his pupils. His sacred character gives him dignity in their eyes, and his solemn functions produce that elevation of mind and sobriety of conduct necessary to those who are to teach youth to think and act worthily.

I speak from my own random observation and experience; but I think I speak correctly. At any rate, I can trace much of what is good in my own heterogeneous compound to the short time I was under the instruction of that good man. He entered into the cares and occupations and amusements of his pupils; and won his way into our confidence, and studied our hearts and minds more intently than we did our books.

He soon sounded the depth of my character. I had become, as I have already hinted, a little liberal in my notions, and apt to philosophise on both politics and religion; having seen something of men and things, and learnt, from my fellow-philosophers, the strollers, to despise all vulgar prejudices. He did not attempt to cast down my vainglory, nor to question my right view of things; he merely instilled into my mind a little information on these topics; though in a quiet unobtrusive way, that never ruffled a feather of my self-conceit. I was astonished to find what a change a little knowledge makes in one's mode of viewing matters; and how different a subject is when one thinks, or when one only talks about it. I conceived a vast deference for my teacher, and was ambitious of his good opinion. In my zeal to make a favourable impression, I presented him with a whole ream of my poetry. He read it attentively, smiled, and pressed my hand when he returned it to me, but said nothing. The next day he set me at mathematics.

Somehow or other the process of teaching seemed robbed by him of all its austerity. I was not conscious that he thwarted an inclination or opposed a wish; but I felt that, for the time, my inclinations were entirely changed. I became fond of study, and zealous to improve myself. I made tolerable advances in studies which I had before considered as unattainable, and I wondered at my own proficiency. I thought, too, I astonished my preceptor; for I often caught his eyes fixed upon me with a peculiar expression. I suspect, since, that he was pensively tracing in my countenace the early lineaments of my mother.

Education was not apportioned by him into tasks, and enjoined as a labour, to be abandoned with joy the moment the hour of study was expired. We had, it is true, our allotted hours of occu-

pation, to give us habits of method, and of the distribution of time; but they were made pleasant to us, and our feelings were enlisted in the cause. When they were over, education still went on. It pervaded all our relaxations and amusements. There was a steady march of improvement. Much of his instruction was given during pleasant rambles, or when seated on the margin of the Avon; and information received in that way, often makes a deeper impression than when acquired by poring over books. I have many of the pure and eloquent precepts that flowed from his lips associated in my mind with lovely scenes in nature, which make the recollection of them indescribably delightful.

I do not pretend to say that any miracle was effected with me. After all said and done, I was but a weak disciple. My poetical temperament still wrought within me and wrestled hard with wisdom, and, I fear, maintained the mastery. I found mathematics an intolerable task in fine weather. I would be prone to forget my problems, to watch the birds hopping about the windows, or the bees humming about the honeysuckles; and whenever I could steal away, I would wander about the grassy borders of the Avon, and excuse this truant propensity to myself with the idea that I was treading classic ground, over which Shakspeare had wandered. What luxurious idleness have I indulged, as I lay under the trees and watched the silver waves rippling through the arches of the broken bridge, and laving the rocky bases of old Warwick Castle; and how often have I thought of sweet Shakspeare, and in my boyish enthusiasm have kissed the waves which had washed his native village.

My good preceptor would often accompany me in these desultory rambles. He sought to get hold of this vagrant mood of mind and turn it to some account. He endeavoured to teach me to mingle thought with mere sensation; to moralize on the scenes around; and to make the beauties of nature administer to the understanding and the heart. He endeavoured to direct my imagination to high and noble objects, and to fill it with lofty images. In a word, he did all he could to make the best of a poetical temperament, and to counteract the mischief which had been done to me by my great expectations.

Had I been earlier put under the care of the good pastor, or remained with him a longer time, I really believe he would have made something of me. He had already brought a great deal of what had been flogged into me into tolerable order, and had weeded out much of the unprofitable wisdom which had sprung up in my vagabondizing. I already began to find, that with all my genius a little study would be no disadvantage to me; and, in spite of my vagrant freaks, I began to doubt my being a second Shakspeare.

Just as I was making these precious discoveries, the good parson died. It was a melancholy day throughout the neighbourhood. He had his little flock of scholars, his children, as he used to call

us, gathered round him in his dying moments; and he gave us the parting advice of a father, now that he had to leave us, and we were to be separated from each other, and scattered about in the world. He took me by the hand, and talked with me earnestly and affectionately, and called to mind my mother, and used her name to enforce his dying exhortations, for I rather think he considered me the most erring and heedless of his flock. He held my hand long in his, long after he had done speaking, and kept his eye fixed on me tenderly and almost piteously: his lips moved as if he were silently praying for me; and he died away, still holding me by the hand.

There was not a dry eye in the church when the funeral service was read from the pulpit from which he had so often preached. When the body was committed to the earth, our little band gathered round it, and watched the coffin as it was lowered into the grave. The parishioners looked at us with sympathy; for we were mourners not merely in dress but in heart. We lingered about the grave, and clung to one another for a time, weeping and speechless, and then parted, like a band of brothers parting from the paternal hearth, never to assemble there again.

How had the gentle spirit of that good man sweetened our natures, and linked our young hearts together by the kindest ties! I have always had a throb of pleasure at meeting with an old schoolmate, even though one of my truant associates; but whenever, in the course of my life, I have encountered one of that little flock with which I was folded on the banks of the Avon, it has been with a gush of affection, and a glow of virtue, that, for the moment have made me a better man.

I was now sent to Oxford, and was wonderfully impressed on first entering it as a student. Learning here puts on all its majesty. It is lodged in palaces; it is sanctified by the sacred ceremonies of religion; it has a pomp and circumstance which powerfully affect the imagination. Such, at least, it had in my eyes, thoughtless as I was. My previous studies with the worthy pastor had prepared me to regard it with deference and awe. He had been educated here, and always spoke of the University with filial fondness and classic veneration. When I beheld the clustering spires and pinnacles of this most august of cities rising from the plain, I hailed them, in my enthusiasm, as the points of a diadem which the nation had placed upon the brows of science.

For a time old Oxford was full of enjoyment for me. There was a charm about its monastic buildings; its great Gothic quadrangles; its solemn halls, and shadowy cloisters. I delighted, in the evenings, to get in places surrounded by the colleges, where all modern buildings were screened from the sight; and to see the professors and students sweeping along in the dusk, in their antiquated caps and gowns. I seemed, for a time, to be transported among the people and edifices of the old times. I was a frequent

attendant, also, of the evening service in the New College Hall; to hear the fine organ, and the choir swelling an anthem, in that solemn building, where painting, music, and architecture, are in such admirable unison.

A favourite haunt, too, was the beautiful walk bordered by lofty elms along the river, behind the grey walls of Magdalen College, which goes by the name of Addison's Walk, from being his favourite resort when an Oxford student. I became also a lounger in the Bodleian Library, and a great dipper into books, though I cannot say that I studied them; in fact, being no longer under direction or control, I was gradually relapsing into mere indulgence of the fancy. Still this would have been pleasant and harmless enough, and I might have awakened from mere literary dreaming to something better. The chances were in my favour, for the riotous times of the University were past. The days of hard drinking were at an end. The old feuds of "Town and Gown," like the civil wars of the White and Red Rose, had died away; and student and citizen slept in peace and whole skins, without risk of being summoned in the night to bloody brawl. It had become the fashion to study at the University, and the odds were always in favour of my following the fashion. Unluckily, however, I fell in company with a special knot of young fellows, of lively parts and ready wit, who had lived occasionally upon town, and become initiated into the *Fancy*. They voted study to be the toil of dull minds, by which they slowly crept up the hill, while genius arrived at it at a bound. I felt ashamed to play the owl among such gay birds; so I threw by my books, and became a man of spirit.

As my father made me a tolerable allowance, notwithstanding the narrowness of his income, having an eye always to my great expectations, I was enabled to appear to advantage among my companions. I cultivated all kinds of sport and exercises. I was one of the most expert oarsmen that rowed on the Isis. I boxed, fenced, angled, shot, and hunted, and my rooms in college were always decorated with whips of all kinds, spurs, fowling-pieces, fishing-rods, foils, and boxing-gloves. A pair of leather breeches would seem to be throwing one leg out of the half-open drawers, and empty bottles lumbered the bottom of every closet.

My father came to see me at college when I was in the height of my career. He asked me how I came on with my studies, and what kind of hunting there was in the neighbourhood. He examined my various sporting apparatus with a curious eye; wanted to know if any of the professors were fox-hunters, and whether they were generally good shots, for he suspected their studying so much must be hurtful to the sight. We had a day's shooting together: I delighted him with my skill, and astonished him by my learned disquisitions on horse-flesh, and on Manton's guns; so, upon the whole, he departed highly satisfied with my improvement at college.

I do not know how it is, but I cannot be long idle without getting in love. I had not been a very long time a man of spirit, therefore, before I became deeply enamoured of a shopkeeper's daughter in the High-street, who, in fact, was the admiration of many of the students. I wrote several sonnets in praise of her, and spent half of my pocket money at the shop, in buying articles which I did not want, that I might have an opportunity of speaking to her. Her father, a severe looking old gentleman, with bright silver buckles, and a crisp-curled wig, kept a strict guard on her, as the fathers generally do upon their daughters in Oxford, and well they may. I tried to get into his good graces, and to be sociable with him, but all in vain. I said several good things in his shop, but he never laughed: he had no relish for wit and humour. He was one of those dry old gentleman who keep youngsters at bay. He had already brought up two or three daughters, and was experienced in the ways of students. He was as knowing and wary as a grey old badger that has often been hunted. To see him on Sunday, so stiff and starched in his demeanor, so precise in his dress, with his daughter under his arm. was enough to deter all graceless youngsters from approaching.

I managed, however, in spite of his vigilance, to have several conversations with his daughter, as I cheapened articles in the shop. I made terrible long bargains, and examined the articles over and over before I purchased. In the meantime, I would convey a sonnet or an acrostic under cover of a piece of cambric, or slipped into a pair of stockings; I would whisper soft nonsense into her ear as I haggled about the price; and would squeeze her hand tenderly as I received my half-pence of change in a bit of whity-brown paper. Let this serve as a hint to all haberdashers who have pretty daughters for shop-girls, and young students for customers. I do not know whether my words and looks were very eloquent, but my poetry was irresistible; for, to tell the truth, the girl had some literary taste, and was seldom without a book from the circulating library.

By the divine power of poetry, therefore, which is so potent with the lovely sex, did I subdue the heart of this fair little haberdasher. We carried on a sentimental correspondence for a time across the counter, and I supplied her with rhyme by the stocking-full. At length I prevailed on her to grant an assignation. But how was this to be effected? Her father kept her always under his eye; she never walked out alone; and the house was locked up the moment that the shop was shut. All these difficulties served but to give zest to the adventure. I proposed that the assignation should be in her own chamber, into which I would climb at night. The plan was irresistible.—A cruel father, a secret lover, and a clandestine meeting! All the little girl's studies from the circulating library seemed about to be realized.

But what had I in view in making this assignation? Indeed, I

know not. I had no evil intentions, nor can I say that I had any good ones. I liked the girl, and wanted to have an opportunity of seeing more of her; and the assignation was made, as I have done many things else, heedlessly and without forethought. I asked myself a few questions of the kind, after all my arrangements were made, but the answers were very unsatisfactory. "Am I to ruin this poor thoughtless girl?" said I to myself. "No!" was the prompt and indignant answer. "Am I to run away with her?"—"Whither, and to what purpose?"—"Well, then, am I to marry her?"—"Poh! a man of my expectations marry a shopkeeper's daughter?" "What am I to do with her?" "Hum—why—let me get into the chamber first, and then consider"—and so the self-examination ended.

Well, sir, "come what come might," I stole under cover of the darkness to the dwelling of my dulcinea. All was quiet. At the concerted signal her window was gently opened. It was just above the projecting bow-window of her father's shop, which assisted me in mounting. The house was low, and I was enabled to scale the fortress with tolerable ease. I clambered with a beating heart; I reached the casement; I hoisted my body half into the chamber; and was welcomed, not by the embraces of my expecting fair one, but by the grasp of the crabbed-looking old father in the crisp-curled wig.

I extricated myself from his clutches, and endeavoured to make my retreat; but I was confounded by his cry of thieves! and robbers! I was bothered too by his Sunday cane, which was amazingly busy about my head as I descended, and against which my hat was but a poor protection. Never before had I an idea of the activity of an old man's arm, and the hardness of the knob of an ivory-headed cane. In my hurry and confusion I missed my footing, and fell sprawling on the pavement. I was immediately surrounded by myrmidons, who, I doubt not, were on the watch for me. Indeed, I was in no situation to escape, for I had sprained my ankle in the fall, and could not stand. I was seized as a housebreaker; and to exonerate myself of a greater crime, I had to accuse myself of a less. I made known who I was, and why I came there. Alas! the varlets knew it already, and were only amusing themselves at my expense. My perfidious muse had been playing me one of her slippery tricks. The old curmudgeon of a father had found my sonnets and acrostics hid away in holes and corners of his shop; he had no taste for poetry like his daughter, and had instituted a rigorous though silent observation. He had moused upon our letters, detected our plans, and prepared everything for my reception. Thus was I ever doomed to be led into scrapes by the muse. Let no man henceforth carry on a secret amour in poetry!

The old man's ire was in some measure appeased by the pommeling of my head and the anguish of my sprain; so he did not

put me to death on the spot. He was even humane enough to furnish a shutter, on which I was carried back to college like a wounded warrior. The porter was roused to admit me. The college gate was thrown open for my entry. The affair was blazed about the next morning, and became the joke of the college from the buttery to the hall.

I had leisure to repent during several weeks' confinement by my sprain, which I passed in translating Boethius's Consolations of Philosophy. I received a most tender and ill-spelled letter from my mistress, who had been sent to a relation in Coventry. She protested her innocence of my misfortune, and vowed to be true to me "till deth." I took no notice of the letter, for I was cured, for the present, both of love and poetry. Women, however, are more constant in their attachments than men, whatever philosophers may say to the contrary. I am assured that she actually remained faithful to her vow for several months; but she had to deal with a cruel father, whose heart was as hard as the knob of his cane. He was not to be touched by tears nor poetry, but absolutely compelled her to marry a reputable young tradesman, who made her a happy woman in spite of herself, and of all the rules of romance; and what is more, the mother of several children. They are at this very day a thriving couple, and keep a snug corner shop, just opposite the figure of Peeping Tom, at Coventry.

I will not fatigue you by any more details of my studies at Oxford; though they were not always as severe as these, nor did I always pay as dear for my lessons. To be brief, then, I lived on in my usual miscellaneous manner, gradually getting knowledge of good and evil, until I had attained my twenty-first year. I had scarcely come of age when I heard of the sudden death of my father. The shock was severe, for though he had never treated me with much kindness, still he was my father, and at his death I felt alone in the world.

I returned home, and found myself the solitary master of the paternal mansion. A crowd of gloomy feelings came thronging upon me. It was a place that always sobered me, and brought me to reflection; now especially, it looked so deserted and melancholy. I entered the little breakfasting-room. There were my father's whip and spurs, hanging by the fireplace; the Stud-Book, Sporting Magazine, and Racing Calendar, his only reading. His favourite spaniel lay on the hearth-rug. The poor animal, who had never before noticed me, now came fondling about me, licked my hand, then looked round the room, whined, wagged his tail slightly, and gazed wistfully in my face. I felt the full force of the appeal. "Poor Dash," said I, "we are both alone in the world, with nobody to care for us, and will take care of one another."—The dog never quitted me afterwards.

I could not go into my mother's room—my heart swelled when I passed within sight of the door. Her portrait hung in the parlour,

just over the place where she used to sit. As I cast my eyes on it, I thought it looked at me with tenderness, and I burst into tears. I was a careless dog, it is true, hardened a little, perhaps, by living in public schools, and buffeting about among strangers, who cared nothing for me; but the recollection of a mother's tenderness was overcoming.

I was not of an age or a temperament to be long depressed. There was a reaction in my system, that always brought me up again after every pressure; and, indeed, my spirits were most buoyant after a temporary prostration. I settled the concerns of the estate as soon as possible; realized my property, which was not very considerable, but which appeared a vast deal to me, having a poetical eye, that magnified every thing; and finding myself, at the end of a few months, free of all further business or restraint, I determined to go to London and enjoy myself. Why should I not?—I was young, animated, joyous; had plenty of funds for present pleasures, and my uncle's estate in the perspective. Let those mope at college, and pore over books, thought I, who have their way to make in the world; it would be ridiculous drudgery in a youth of my expectations.

Away to London, therefore, I rattled in a tandem, determined to take the town gaily. I passed through several of the villages where I had played the Jack Pudding a few years before; and I visited the scenes of many of my adventures and follies, merely from that feeling of melancholy pleasure which we have in stepping again the footprints of foregone existence, even when they have passed among weeds and briers. I made a circuit in the latter part of my journey, so as to take in the West End and Hampstead, the scenes of my last dramatic exploit, and of the battle royal of the booth. As I drove along the ridge of Hampstead Hill, by Jack Straw's Castle, I paused at the spot where Columbine and I had sat down so disconsolately in our ragged finery, and had looked dubiously on London. I almost expected to see her again, standing on the hill's brink, "like Niobe, all tears;"—mournful as Babylon in ruins!

"Poor Columbine!" said I, with a heavy sigh, "thou wert a gallant, generous girl—a true woman; faithful to the distressed, and ready to sacrifice thyself in the cause of worthless man!"

I tried to whistle off the recollection of her, for there was always something of self-reproach with it. I drove gaily along the road, enjoying the stare of hostlers and stable-boys, as I managed my horses knowingly down the steep street of Hampstead: when, just at the skirts of the village, one of the traces of my leader came loose. I pulled up, and as the animal was restive, and my servant a bungler, I called for assistance to the robustious master of a snug ale-house, who stood at his door with a tankard in his hand. He came readily to assist me, followed by his wife, with her bosom half open, a child in her arms, and two more at her

heels. I stared for a moment, as if doubting my eyes. I could not be mistaken; in the fat, beer-blown landlord of the ale-house, I recollected my old rival Harlequin, and in his slattern spouse, the once trim and dimpling Columbine.

The change of my looks from youth to manhood, and the change in my circumstances, prevented them from recognising me. They could not suspect in the dashing young buck, fashionably dressed and driving his own equipage, the painted beau, with old peaked hat, and long, flimsy, sky-blue coat. My heart yearned with kindness towards Columbine, and I was glad to see her establishment a thriving one. As soon as the harness was adjusted, I tossed a small purse of gold into her ample bosom; and then, pretending to give my horses a hearty cut of the whip, I made the lash curl with a whistling about the sleek sides of ancient Harlequin. The horses dashed off like lightning, and I was whirled out of sight before either of the parties could get over their surprise at my liberal donations. I have always considered this as one of the greatest proofs of my poetical genius; it was distributing poetical justice in perfection.

I now entered London *en cavalier*, and became a blood upon town. I took fashionable lodgings, in the West End; employed the first tailor; frequented the regular lounges; gambled a little; lost my money good-humouredly, and gained a number of fashionable, good-for-nothing acquaintances. I gained some reputation also for a man of science, having become an expert boxer in the course of my studies at Oxford. I was distinguished, therefore, among the gentlemen of the Fancy; became hand and glove with certain boxing noblemen, and was the admiration of the Fives Court. A gentleman's science, however, is apt to get him into sad scrapes; he is too prone to play the knight-errant, and to pick up quarrels which less scientific gentlemen would quietly avoid. I undertook one day to punish the insolence of a porter. He was a Hercules of a fellow, but then I was so secure in my science! I gained the victory of course. The porter pocketed his humiliation, bound up his broken head, and went about his business as unconcernedly as though nothing had happened; while I went to bed with my victory, and did not dare to show my battered face for a fortnight: by which I discovered that a gentleman may have the worst of the battle even when victorious.

I am naturally a philosopher, and no one can moralize better after a misfortune has taken place; so I lay on my bed and moralized on this sorry ambition, which levels the gentleman with the clown. I know it is the opinion of many sages, who have thought deeply on these matters, that the noble science of boxing keeps up the bull-dog courage of the nation; and far be it from me to decry the advantage of becoming a nation of bull-dogs; but I now saw clearly that it was calculated to keep up the breed of English ruffians. "What is the Fives Court" said I to myself,

as I turned uncomfortably in bed, "but a college of scoundrelism, where every bully ruffian in the land may gain a fellowship? What is the slang language of the Fancy but a jargon by which fools and knaves commune and understand each other, and enjoy a kind of superiority over the uninitiated? What is a boxing match but an arena, where the noble and the illustrious are jostled into familiarity with the infamous and the vulgar? What, in fact, is the Fancy itself, but a chain of easy communication extending from the peer down to the pickpocket, through the medium of which a man of rank may find he has shaken hands, at three removes, with the murderer on the gibbet?—

"Enough!" ejaculated I, thoroughly convinced through the force of my philosophy, and the pain of my bruises—"I'll have nothing more to do with the Fancy." So when I had recovered from my victory, I turned my attention to softer themes, and became a devoted admirer of the ladies. Had I had more industry and ambition in my nature, I might have worked my way to the very height of fashion, as I saw many laborious gentlemen doing around me. But it is a toilsome, an anxious, and an unhappy life; there are few beings so sleepless and miserable as your cultivators of fashionable smiles. I was quite content with that kind of society which forms the frontiers of fashion, and may be easily taken possession of. I found it a light, easy, productive soil. I had but to go about and sow visiting cards, and I reaped a whole harvest of invitations. Indeed, my figure and address were by no means against me. It was whispered, too, among the young ladies, that I was prodigiously clever, and wrote poetry; and the old ladies had ascertained that I was a young gentleman of good family, handsome fortune, and "great expectations."

I now was carried away by the hurry of gay life, so intoxicating to a young man, and which a man of poetical temperament enjoys so highly on his first tasting of it; that rapid variety of sensations; that whirl of brilliant objects; that succession of pungent pleasures! I had no time for thought. I only felt. I never attempted to write poetry; my poetry seemed all to go off by transpiration. I lived poetry; it was all a poetical dream to me. A mere sensualist knows nothing of the delights of a splendid metropolis. He lives in a round of animal gratifications and heartless habits. But to a young man of poetical feelings, it is an ideal world, a scene of enchantment and delusion; his imagination is in perpetual excitement, and gives a spiritual zest to every pleasure.

A season of town-life, however, somewhat sobered me of my intoxication; or rather I was rendered more serious by one of my old complaints—I fell in love. It was with a very pretty, though a very haughty fair one, who had come to London under the care of an old maiden aunt to enjoy the pleasures of a winter in town, and to get married. There was not a doubt of her commanding a choice of lovers; for she had long been the belle of a little cathe-

dral city, and one of the poets of the place had absolutely celebrated her beauty in a copy of Latin verses. The most extravagant anticipations were formed by her friends of the sensation she would produce. It was feared by some that she might be precipitate in her choice, and take up with some inferior title. The aunt was determined nothing should gain her under a lord.

Alas! with all her charms, the young lady lacked the one thing needful—she had no money. So she waited in vain for duke, marquis, or earl to throw himself at her feet. As the season waned, so did the lady's expectations; when, just towards the close, I made my advances.

I was most favourably received by both the young lady and her aunt. It is true I had no title; but then such great expectations! A marked preference was immediately shown me over two rivals, the younger son of a needy baronet, and a captain of dragoons on half-pay. I did not absolutely take the field in form, for I was determined not to be precipitate; but I drove my equipage frequently through the street in which she lived, and was always sure to see her at the window, generally with a book in her hand. I resumed my knack at rhyming, and sent her a long copy of verses; anonymously, to be sure, but she knew my hand-writing. Both aunt and niece, however, displayed the most delightful ignorance on the subject. The young lady showed them to me; wondered who they could be written by; and declared there was nothing in this world she loved so much as poetry; while the maiden aunt would put her pinching spectacles on her nose, and read them, with blunders in sense and sound, excruciating to an author's ears; protesting there was nothing equal to them in the whole Elegant Extracts.

The fashionable season closed without my adventuring to make a declaration, though I certainly had encouragement. I was not perfectly sure that I had effected a lodgment in the young lady's heart; and, to tell the truth, the aunt overdid her part, and was a little too extravagant in her liking of me. I knew that maiden aunts were not apt to be captivated by the mere personal merits of their nieces' admirers; and I wanted to ascertain how much of all this favour I owed to driving an equipage, and having great expectations.

I had received many hints how charming their native place was during the summer months; what pleasant society they had; and what beautiful drives about the neighbourhood. They had not, therefore, returned home long, before I made my appearance in dashing style, driving down the principal street. The very next morning I was seen at prayers, seated in the same pew with the reigning belle. Questions were whispered about the aisles, after service, "Who is he?" and "What is he?" And the replies were as usual, "A young gentleman of good family and fortune, and great expectations."

I was much struck with the peculiarities of this reverend little place. A cathedral, with its dependencies and regulations, presents a picture of other times, and of a different order of things. It is

a rich relic of a more poetical age. There still linger about it the silence and solemnity of the cloister. In the present instance especially, where the cathedral was large, and the town small, its influence was the more apparent. The solemn pomp of the service, performed twice a-day, with the grand intonations of the organ, and the voices of the choir swelling through the magnificent pile, diffused, as it were, a perpetual Sabbath over the place. This routine of solemn ceremony continually going on, independent, as it were, of the world; this daily offering of melody and praise, ascending like incense from the altar, had a powerful effect upon my imagination.

The aunt introduced me to her coterie, formed of families connected with the cathedral, and others of moderate fortune, but high respectability, who had nestled themselves under the wings of the cathedral to enjoy good society at moderate expense. It was a highly aristocratical little circle; scrupulous in its intercourse with others, and jealously cautious about admitting anything common or unclean.

It seemed as if the courtesies of the old school had taken refuge here. There were continual interchanges of civilities, and of small presents of fruits and delicacies, and of complimentary crow-quill billets; for, in a quiet well-bred community like this, living entirely at ease, little duties, and little amusements, and little civilities, fill up the day. I have seen, in the midst of a warm day, a corpulent powdered footman, issuing from the iron gateway of a stately mansion, and traversing the little place with an air of mighty import, bearing a small tart on a large silver salver.

Their evening amusements were sober and primitive. They assembled at a moderate hour; the young ladies played music, and the old ladies whist; and at an early hour they dispersed. There was no parade on these social occasions. Two or three old sedan chairs were in constant activity, though the greater part made their exit in clogs and pattens, with a footman, or waiting-maid, carrying a lantern in advance; and long before midnight the clank of pattens and gleam of lanterns about the quiet little place told that the evening party had dissolved.

Still I did not feel myself altogether so much at my ease as I had anticipated, considering the smallness of the place. I found it very different from other country places, and that it was not so easy to make a dash there. Sinner that I was! the very dignity and decorum of the little community was rebuking to me. I feared my past idleness and folly would rise in judgment against me. I stood in awe of the dignities of the cathedral, whom I saw mingling familiarly in society. I became nervous on this point. The creak of a prebendary's shoes sounding from one end of a quiet street to the other, was appalling to me; and the sight of a shovel hat was sufficient at any time to check me in the midst of my boldest poetical soarings.

And then the good aunt could not be quiet, but would cry me up for a genius, and extol my poetry to every one. So long as she confined this to the ladies, it did well enough, because they were able to feel and appreciate poetry of the new romantic school. Nothing would content the good lady, however, but she must read my verses to a prebendary, who had long been the undoubted critic of the place. He was a thin delicate old gentleman, of mild, polished manners, steeped to the lips in classic lore, and not easily put in a heat by any hot-blooded poetry of the day. He listened to my most fervid thoughts and fervid words without a glow; shook his head with a smile, and condemned them as not being according to Horace, as not being legitimate poetry.

Several old ladies, who had heretofore been my admirers, shook their heads at hearing this; they could not think of praising any poetry that was not according to Horace; and as to any thing illegitimate, it was not to be countenanced in good society. Thanks to my stars, however, I had youth and novelty on my side; so the young ladies persisted in admiring my poetry, in despite of Horace and illegitimacy.

I consoled myself with the good opinion of the young ladies, whom I had always found to be the best judges of poetry. As to these old scholars, said I, they are apt to be chilled by being steeped in the cold fountains of the classics. Still I felt that I was losing ground, and that it was necessary to bring matters to a point. Just at this time there was a public ball, attended by the best society of the place, and by the gentry of the neighbourhood: I took great pains with my toilet on the occasion, and I had never looked better. I had determined that night to make my grand assault on the heart of the young lady, to battle it with all my forces, and the next morning to demand a surrender in due form.

I entered the ballroom amidst a buzz and flutter, which generally took place among the young ladies on my appearance. I was in fine spirits; for, to tell the truth, I had exhilirated myself by a cheerful glass of wine on the occasion. I talked, and rattled, and said a thousand silly things, slap-dash, with all the confidence of a man sure of his auditors,—and everything had its effect.

In the midst of my triumph I observed a little knot gathering together in the upper part of the room. By degrees it increased. A tittering broke out there, and glances were cast round at me, and then there would be fresh tittering. Some of the young ladies would hurry away to distant parts of the room, and whisper to their friends. Wherever they went, there was still this tittering and glancing at me. I did not know what to make of all this. I looked at myself from head to foot, and peeped at my back in a glass, to see if anything was odd about my person; any awkward exposure, any whimsical tag hanging out:—no—everything was right—I was a perfect picture. I determined that it must be some choice saying of mine that was bandied about in this knot of

merry beauties, and I determined to enjoy one of my good things in the rebound. I stepped gently, therefore, up the room, smiling at every one as I passed, who, I must say, all smiled and tittered in return. I approached the group, smirking and perking my chin, like a man who is full of pleasant feeling, and sure of being well received. The cluster of little belles opened as I advanced.

Heavens and earth! whom should I perceive in the midst of them but my early and tormenting flame, the everlasting Sacharissa! She was grown, it is true, into the full beauty of womanhood; but showed, by the provoking merriment of her countenance, that she perfectly recollected me, and the ridiculous flagellations of which she had twice been the cause.

I saw at once the exterminating cloud of ridicule bursting over me. My crest fell. The flame of love went suddenly out, or was extinguished by overwhelming shame. How I got down the room I know not: I fancied every one tittering at me. Just as I reached the door, I caught a glance of my mistress and her aunt, listening to the whispers of Sacharissa, the old lady raising her hands and eyes, and the face of the young one lighted up, as I imagined, with scorn ineffable. I paused to see no more, but made two steps from the top of the stairs to the bottom. The next morning, before sunrise, I beat a retreat, and did not feel the blushes cool from my tingling cheeks, until I had lost sight of the old towers of the cathedral.

I now returned to town, thoughtful and crest-fallen. My money was nearly spent, for I had lived freely and without calculation. The dream of love was over, and the reign of pleasure at an end. I determined to retrench while I had yet a trifle left: so selling my equipage and horses for half their value, I quietly put the money in my pocket, and turned pedestrian. I had not a doubt that, with my great expectations, I could at any time raise funds, either on usury or by borrowing; but I was principled against both, and resolved, by strict economy, to make my slender purse hold out until my uncle should give up the ghost, or rather the estate. I stayed at home, therefore, and read, and would have written, but I had already suffered too much from my poetical productions, which had generally involved me in some ridiculous scrape. I gradually acquired a rusty look, and had a straitened money-borrowing air, upon which the world began to shy me. I have never felt disposed to quarrel with the world for its conduct: it has always used me well. When I have been flush and gay, and disposed for society, it has caressed me; and when I have been pinched and reduced, and wished to be alone, why, it has left me alone; and what more could a man desire? Take my word for it, this world is a more obliging world than people generally represent it.

Well, sir, in the midst of my retrenchment, my retirement, and my studiousness, I received news that my uncle was dangerously ill. I hastened on the wings of an heir's affections to receive his

dying breath and his last testament. I found him attended by his faithful valet, old Iron John; by the woman who occasionally worked about the house, and by the foxy-headed boy, young Orson, whom I had occasionally hunted about the park. Iron John gasped a kind of asthmatical salutation as I entered the room, and received me with something almost like a smile of welcome. The woman sat blubbering at the foot of the bed; and the foxy-headed Orson, who had now grown up to be a lubberly lout, stood gazing in stupid vacancy at a distance.

My uncle lay stretched upon his back. The chamber was without fire, or any of the comforts of a sick-room. The cobwebs flaunted from the ceiling. The tester was covered with dust, and the curtains were tattered. From underneath the bed peered out one end of his strong box. Against the wainscot were suspended rusty blunderbusses, horse-pistols, and a cut-and-thrust sword, with which he had fortified his room, to defend his life and treasure. He had employed no physician during his illness; and from the scanty relics lying on the table, seemed almost to have denied to himself the assistance of a cook.

When I entered the room, he was lying motionless; his eyes fixed, and his mouth open: at the first look I thought him a corpse. The noise of my entrance made him turn his head. At the sight of me a ghastly smile came over his face, and his glazing eye gleamed with satisfaction. It was the only smile he had ever given me, and it went to my heart. "Poor old man!" thought I, "why should you force me to leave you thus desolate, when I see that my presence has the power to cheer you?"

"Nephew," said he, after several efforts, and in a low gasping voice—"I am glad you are come. I shall now die with satisfaction. Look," said he, raising his withered hand, and pointing—"look in that box on the table: you will find that I have not forgotten you."

I pressed his hand to my heart, and the tears stood in my eyes. I sat down by his bedside, and watched him, but he never spoke again. My presence, however, gave him evident satisfaction; for every now and then, as he looked at me, a vague smile would come over his visage, and he would feebly point to the sealed box on the table. As the day wore away, his life appeared to wear away with it. Towards sunset his head sank on the bed, and lay motionless, his eyes grew glazed, his mouth remained open, and thus he gradually died.

I could not but feel shocked at this absolute extinction of my kindred. I dropped a tear of real sorrow over this strange old man, who had thus reserved the smile of kindness to his death-bed; like an evening sun after a gloomy day, just shining out to set in darkness. Leaving the corpse in charge of the domestics, I retired for the night.

It was a rough night. The winds seemed as if singing my

uncle's requiem about the mansion, and the bloodhounds howled without as if they knew of the death of their old master. Iron John almost grudged me the tallow candle to burn in my apartment, and light up its dreariness, so accustomed had he been to starveling economy. I could not sleep. The recollection of my uncle's dying scene, and the dreary sounds about the house, affected my mind. These, however, were succeeded by plans for the future, and I lay awake the greater part of the night, indulging the poetical anticipation how soon I should make these old walls ring with cheerful life, and restore the hospitality of my mother's ancestors.

My uncle's funeral was decent but private. I knew that nobody respected his memory, and I was determined none should be summoned to sneer over his funeral, and make merry at his grave. He was buried in the church of the neighbouring village, though it was not the burying-place of his race; but he had expressly enjoined that he should not be buried with his family: he had quarrelled with most of them when living, and he carried his resentments even into the grave.

I defrayed the expenses of his funeral out of my own purse, that I might have done with the undertakers at once, and clear the ill-omened birds from the premises. I invited the parson of the parish, and the lawyer from the village, to attend at the house the next morning, and hear the reading of the will. I treated them to an excellent breakfast, a profusion that had not been seen at the house for many a year. As soon as the breakfast things were removed, I summoned Iron John, the woman, and the boy, for I was particular in having every one present and proceeding regularly. The box was placed on the table—all was silence—I broke the seal—raised the lid, and beheld—not the will—but my accursed poem of Doubting Castle and Giant Despair!

Could any mortal have conceived that this old withered man, so taciturn, and apparently so lost to feeling, could have treasured up for years the thoughtless pleasantry of a boy, to punish him with such cruel ingenuity? I now could account for his dying smile, the only one he had ever given me. He had been a grave man all his life; it was strange that he should die in the enjoyment of a joke, and it was hard that that joke should be at my expense.

The lawyer and the parson seemed at a loss to comprehend the matter. "Here must be some mistake," said the lawyer; "there is no will here."

"Oh!" said Iron John, creaking forth his rusty jaws, "if it is a will you are looking for, I believe I can find one."

He retired with the same singular smile with which he had greeted me on my arrival, and which I now apprehended boded me no good. In a little while he returned with a will perfect at all points, properly signed and sealed, and witnessed and worded with horrible correctness; in which the deceased left large legacies to Iron John and his daughter, and the residue of his fortune to the

foxy-headed boy; who, to my utter astonishment, was his son by this very woman; he having married her privately, and, as I verily believe, for no other purpose than to have an heir, and so balk my father and his issue of the inheritance. There was one little proviso, in which he mentioned, that, having discovered his nephew to have a pretty turn for poetry, he presumed he had no occasion for wealth; he recommended him, however, to the patronage of his heir, and requested that he might have a garret, rent-free, in Doubting Castle.

GRAVE REFLECTIONS OF A DISAPPOINTED MAN.

Mr. Buckthorne had paused at the death of his uncle, and the downfall of his great expectations, which formed, as he said, an epoch in his history; and it was not until some little time afterwards, and in a very sober mood, that he resumed his party-coloured narrative.

After leaving the remains of my defunct uncle, said he, when the gate closed between me and what was once to have been mine, I felt thrust out naked into the world, and completely abandoned to fortune. What was to become of me? I had been brought up to nothing but expectations, and they had all been disappointed. I had no relations to look to for counsel or assistance. The world seemed all to have died away from me. Wave after wave of relationship had ebbed off, and I was left a mere hulk upon the strand. I am not apt to be greatly cast down, but at this time I felt sadly disheartened. I could not realize my situation, nor form a conjecture how I was to get forward. I was now to endeavour to make money. The idea was new and strange to me. It was like being asked to discover the philosopher's stone. I had never thought about money otherwise than to put my hand into my pocket and find it; or if there were none there, to wait until a new supply came from home. I had considered life as a mere space of time to be filled up with enjoyments; but to have it portioned out into long hours and days of toil, merely that I might gain bread to give me strength to toil on—to labour but for the purpose of perpetuating a life of labour, was new and appalling to me. This may appear a very simple matter to some; but it will be understood by every unlucky wight in my predicament, who has had the misfortune of being born to great expectations.

I passed several days in rambling about the scenes of my boyhood; partly because I absolutely did not know what to do with myself, and partly because I did not know that I should ever see them again. I clung to them as one clings to a wreck, though he knows he must eventually cast himself loose and swim for his life. I sat down on a little hill within sight of my paternal home, but I did not venture to approach it, for I felt compunction at the thoughtlessness with which I had dissipated my patrimony; yet,

was I to blame, when I had the rich possessions of my curmudgeon of an uncle in expectation?

The new possessor of the place was making great alterations. The house was almost rebuilt. The trees which stood about it were cut down; my mother's flower-garden was thrown into a lawn—all was undergoing a change. I turned my back upon it with a sigh, and rambled to another part of the country.

How thoughtful a little adversity makes one! As I came within sight of the schoolhouse where I had so often been flogged in the cause of wisdom, you would hardly have recognised the truant boy, who, but a few years since, had eloped so heedlessly from its walls. I leaned over the paling of the play-ground, and watched the scholars at their games, and looked to see if there might not be some urchin among them like what I was once, full of gay dreams about life and the world. The play-ground seemed smaller than when I used to sport about it. The house and park, too, of the neighbouring squire, the father of the cruel Sacharissa, had shrunk in size and diminished in magnificence. The distant hills no longer appeared so far off, and, alas! no longer awakened ideas of a fairy land beyond.

As I was rambling pensively through a neighbouring meadow, in which I had many a time gathered primroses, I met the very pedagogue who had been the tyrant and dread of my boyhood. I had sometimes vowed to myself, when suffering under his rod, that I would have my revenge if ever I met him when I had grown to be a man. The time had come: but I had no disposition to keep my vow. The few years which had matured me into a vigorous man had shrunk him into decrepitude. He appeared to have had a paralytic stroke. I looked at him, and wondered that this poor helpless mortal could have been an object of terror to me: that I should have watched with anxiety the glance of that failing eye, or dreaded the power of that trembling hand. He tottered feebly along the path, and had some difficulty in getting over a stile. I ran and assisted him. He looked at me with surprise, but did not recognise me, and made a low bow of humility and thanks. I had no disposition to make myself known, for I felt that I had nothing to boast of. The pains he had taken, and the pains he had inflicted, had been equally useless. His repeated predictions were fully verified, and I felt that little Jack Buckthorne, the idle boy, had grown to be a very good-for-nothing man.

This is all very comfortless detail; but as I have told you of my follies, it is meet that I show you how for once I was schooled for them. The most thoughtless of mortals will some time or other have his day of gloom, when he will be compelled to reflect.

I felt on this occasion as if I had a kind of penance to perform, and I made a pilgrimage in expiation of my past levity. Having passed a night at Leamington, I set off by a private path, which leads up a hill through a grove and across quiet fields, till

I came to the small village, or rather hamlet, of Lenington. I sought the village church. It is an old low edifice of grey stone, on the brow of a small hill, looking over fertile fields, towards where the proud towers of Warwick castle lift themselves against the distant horizon.

A part of the churchyard is shaded by large trees. Under one of them my mother lay buried. You have no doubt thought me a light, heartless being. I thought myself so; but there are moments of adversity which let us into some feelings of our nature to which we might otherwise remain perpetual strangers.

I sought my mother's grave; the weeds were already matted over it, and the tombstone was half hid among nettles. I cleared them away, and they stung my hands; but I was heedless of the pain, for my heart ached too severely. I sat down on the grave, and read over and over again the epitaph on the stone.

It was simple,—but it was true. I had written it myself. I had tried to write a poetical epitaph, but in vain; my feelings refused to utter themselves in rhyme. My heart had gradually been filling during my lonely wanderings; it was now charged to the brim, and overflowed. I sank upon the grave, and buried my face in the tall grass, and wept like a child. Yes, I wept in manhood upon the grave, as I had in infancy upon the bosom of my mother. Alas! how little do we appreciate a mother's tenderness while living; how heedless are we in youth of all her anxieties and kindness! But when she is dead and gone; when the cares and coldness of the world come withering to our hearts; when we find how hard it is to meet with true sympathy; how few love us for ourselves; how few will befriend us in our misfortunes; then it is that we think of the mother we have lost. It is true I had always loved my mother, even in my most heedless days; but I felt how inconsiderate and ineffectual had been my love. My heart melted as I retraced the days of infancy, when I was led by a mother's hand, and rocked to sleep in a mother's arms, and was without care or sorrow. "O my mother!" exclaimed I, burying my face again in the grass of the grave; "O that I were once more by your side; sleeping never to wake again on the cares and troubles of this world."

I am not naturally of a morbid temperament, and the violence of my emotion gradually exhausted itself. It was a hearty, honest, natural discharge of grief which had been slowly accumulating, and gave me wonderful relief. I rose from the grave as if I had been offering up a sacrifice, and I felt as if that sacrifice had been accepted.

I sat down again on the grass, and plucked, one by one, the weeds from her grave: the tears trickled more slowly down my cheeks, and ceased to be bitter. It was a comfort to think that she had died before sorrow and poverty came upon her child, and that all his great expectations were blasted.

I leaned my cheek upon my hand, and looked upon the landscape. Its quiet beauty soothed me. The whistle of a peasant from an adjoining field came cheerily to my ear. I seemed to respire hope and comfort with the free air that whispered through the leaves, and played lightly with my hair, and dried the tears upon my cheek. A lark, rising from the field before me, and leaving as it were a stream of song behind him as he rose, lifted my fancy with him. He hovered in the air just above the place where the towers of Warwick castle marked the horizon, and seemed as if fluttering with delight at his own melody. "Surely," thought I, "if there was such a thing as transmigration of souls, this might be taken for some poet let loose from earth, but still revelling in song, and caroling about fair fields and lordly towers."

At this moment the long-forgotten feeling of poetry rose within me. A thought sprang at once into my mind.—"I will become an author!" said I. "I have hitherto indulged in poetry as a pleasure, and it has brought me nothing but pain; let me try what it will do when I cultivate it with a devotion as a pursuit."

The resolution thus suddenly aroused within me heaved a load from off my heart. I felt a confidence in it from the very place where it was formed. It seemed as though my mother's spirit whispered it to me from the grave. "I will henceforth," said I, "endeavour to be all that she fondly imagined me. I will endeavour to act as if she were witness of my actions; I will endeavour to acquit myself in such a manner that, when I revisit her grave, there may at least be no compunctious bitterness with my tears."

I bowed down and kissed the turf in solemn attestation of my vow. I plucked some primroses that were growing there, and laid them next my heart. I left the churchyard with my spirit once more lifted up, and set out a third time for London in the character of an author.——

Here my companion made a pause, and I waited in anxious suspense, hoping to have a whole volume of literary life unfolded to me. He seemed, however, to have sunk into a fit of pensive musing, and when, after some time, I gently roused him by a question or two as to his literary career,

"No," said he, smiling, "over that part of my story I wish to leave a cloud. Let the mysteries of the craft rest sacred for me. Let those who have never ventured into the republic of letters still look upon it as a fairy land. Let them suppose the author the very being they picture him from his works—I am not the man to mar their illusion. I am not the man to hint, while one is admiring the silken web of Persia, that it has been spun from the entrails of a miserable worm."

"Well," said I, "if you will tell me nothing of your literary history, let me know at least if you have had any farther intelligence from Doubting Castle."

"Willingly," replied he, "though I have but little to communicate."

THE BOOBY SQUIRE.

A long time elapsed, said Buckthorne, without my receiving any accounts of my cousin and his estate. Indeed, I felt so much soreness on the subject, that I wished if possible to shut it from my thoughts. At length chance took me to that part of the country, and I could not refrain from making some inquiries.

I learnt that my cousin had grown up ignorant, self-willed, and clownish. His ignorance and clownishness had prevented his mingling with the neighbouring gentry: in spite of his great fortune, he had been unsuccessful in an attempt to gain the hand of the daughter of the parson, and had at length shrunk into the limits of such a society as a mere man of wealth can gather in a country neighbourhood.

He kept horses and hounds, and a roaring table, at which were collected the loose livers of the country round, and the shabby gentlemen of a village in the vicinity. When he could get no other company, he would smoke and drink with his own servants, who in turn fleeced and despised him. Still, with all his apparent prodigality, he had a leaven of the old man in him, which showed that he was his trueborn son. He lived far within his income, was vulgar in his expenses, and penurious in many points wherein a gentleman would be extravagant. His house-servants were obliged occasionally to work on his estate, and part of the pleasure-grounds were ploughed up and devoted to husbandry.

His table, though plentiful, was coarse; his liquors were strong and bad; and more ale and whisky were expended in his establishment than generous wine. He was loud and arrogant at his own table, and exacted a rich man's homage from his vulgar and obsequious guests.

As to Iron John, his old grandfather, he had grown impatient of the tight hand his own grandson kept over him, and quarrelled with him soon after he came to the estate. The old man had retired to the neighbouring village, where he lived on the legacy of his late master, in a small cottage, and was as seldom seen out of it as a rat out of his hole in daylight.

The cub, like Caliban, seemed to have an instinctive attachment to his mother. She resided with him, but, from long habit, she acted more as a servant than as a mistress of the mansion; for she toiled in all the domestic drudgery, and was oftener in the kitchen than the parlour. Such was the information which I collected, of my rival cousin, who had so unexpectedly elbowed me out of all my expectations.

I now felt an irresistible hankering to pay a visit to this scene of my boyhood, and to get a peep at the odd kind of life that was passing within the mansion of my maternal ancestors. I deter-

mined to do so in disguise. My booby cousin had never seen enough of me to be very familiar with my countenance, and a few years make great difference between youth and manhood. I understood he was a breeder of cattle, and proud of his stock; I dressed myself therefore as a substantial farmer, and with the assistance of a red scratch that came low down on my forehead, made a complete change in my physiognomy.

It was past three o'clock when I arrived at the gate of the park, and was admitted by an old woman who was washing in a dilapidated building which had once been a porter's lodge. I advanced up the remains of a noble avenue, many of the trees of which had been cut down and sold for timber. The grounds were in scarcely better keeping than during my uncle's lifetime. The grass was overgrown with weeds, and the trees wanted pruning and clearing of dead branches. Cattle were grazing about the lawns, and ducks and geese swimming in the fish-ponds. The road to the house bore very few traces of carriage-wheels, as my cousin received few visitors but such as came on foot or horseback, and never used a carriage himself. Once, indeed, as I was told, he had the old family carriage drawn out from among the dust and cobwebs of the coach-house, and furbished up, and driven, with his mother, to the village church, to take formal possession of the family pew; but there was such hooting and laughing after them, as they passed through the village, and such giggling and bantering about the church-door, that the pageant had never made a reappearance.

As I approached the house, a legion of whelps sallied out barking at me, accompanied by the low howling, rather than barking, of two old worn-out bloodhounds, which I recognised for the ancient lifeguards of my uncle. The house had still a neglected random appearance, though much altered for the better since my last visit. Several of the windows were broken and patched up with boards, and others had been bricked up to save taxes. I observed smoke, however, rising from the chimneys, a phenomenon rarely witnessed in the ancient establishment. On passing that part of the house where the dining-room was situated, I heard the sound of boisterous merriment, where three or four voices were talking at once, and oaths and laughter were horribly mingled.

The uproar of the dogs had brought a servant to the door, a tall hard-fisted country clown, with a livery coat put over the under garments of a ploughman. I requested to see the master of the house, but was told that he was at dinner with some "gemmen" of the neighbourhood. I made known my business, and sent in to know if I might talk with the master about his cattle, for I felt a great desire to have a peep at him in his orgies.

Word was returned that he was engaged with company, and could not attend to business, but that if I would step in and take a drink of something, I was heartily welcome. I accordingly entered the hall, where whips and hats of all kinds and shapes

were lying on an oaken table; two or three clownish servants were lounging about; every thing had a look of confusion and carelessness.

The apartments through which I passed had the same air of departed gentility and sluttish housekeeping. The once rich curtains were faded and dusty, the furniture greased and tarnished. On entering the dining-room I found a number of odd, vulgar-looking, rustic gentlemen seated round a table, on which were bottles, decanters, tankards, pipes, and tobacco. Several dogs were lying about the room, or sitting and watching their masters, and one was gnawing a bone under a side-table. The master of the feast sat at the head of the board. He was greatly altered. He had grown thickset and rather gummy, with a fiery foxy head of hair. There was a singular mixture of foolishness, arrogance, and conceit, in his countenance. He was dressed in a vulgarly fine style, with leather breeches, a red waistcoat, and green coat, and was evidently, like his guests, a little flushed with drinking. The whole company stared at me with a whimsical muzzy look, like men whose senses were a little obfuscated by beer rather than wine.

My cousin, (God forgive me! the appellation sticks in my throat,) my cousin invited me with awkward civility, or, as he intended it, condescension, to sit to the table and drink. We talked, as usual, about the weather, the crops, politics, and hard times. My cousin was a loud politician, and evidently accustomed to talk without contradiction at his own table. He was amazingly loyal, and talked of standing by the throne to the last guinea, "as every gentleman of fortune should do." The village exciseman, who was half asleep, could just ejaculate "very true" to everything he said. The conversation turned upon cattle; he boasted of his breed, his mode of crossing it, and of the general management of his estate. This, unluckily, drew on a history of the place and of the family. He spoke of my late uncle with the greatest irreverence, which I could easily forgive. He mentioned my name, and my blood began to boil. He described my frequent visits to my uncle, when I was a lad, and I found the varlet, even at that time, imp as he was, had known that he was to inherit the estate. He described the scene of my uncle's death, and the opening of the will, with a degree of coarse humour that I had not expected from him; and, vexed as I was, I could not help joining in the laugh, for I have always relished a joke, even though made at my own expense. He went on to speak of my various pursuits, my strolling freak, and that somewhat nettled me; at length he talked of my parents. He ridiculed my father; I stomached even that, though with great difficulty. He mentioned my mother with a sneer, and in an instant he lay sprawling at my feet.

Here a tumult succeeded: the table was nearly overturned; bottles, glasses, and tankards, rolled crashing and clattering about the floor. The company seized hold of both of us, to keep us

from doing any further mischief. I struggled to get loose, for I was boiling with fury. My cousin defied me to strip and fight him on the lawn. I agreed, for I felt the strength of a giant in me, and I longed to pommel him soundly.

Away then we were borne. A ring was formed. I had a second assigned me in true boxing style. My cousin, as he advanced to fight, said something about his generosity in showing me such fair play, when I had made such an unprovoked attack upon him at his own table. "Stop there!" cried I, in a rage. "Unprovoked? know that I am John Buckthorne, and you have insulted the memory of my mother."

The lout was suddenly struck by what I said: he drew back, and thought for a moment.

"Nay, damn it," said he, "that's too much—that's clean another thing—I've a mother myself—and no one shall speak ill of her, bad as she is."

He paused again: nature seemed to have a rough struggle in his rude bosom.

"Damn it, cousin," cried he, "I'm sorry for what I said. Thou'st served me right in knocking me down, and I like thee the better for it. Here's my hand: come and live with me, and damn me but the best room in the house, and the best horse in the stable, shall be at thy service."

I declare to you I was strongly moved at this instance of nature breaking her way through such a lump of flesh. I forgave the fellow in a moment his two heinous crimes, of having been born in wedlock, and inheriting my estate. I shook the hand he offered me, to convince him that I bore him no ill-will; and then, making my way through the gaping crowd of toadeaters, bade adieu to my uncle's domains for ever.—This is the last I have seen or heard of my cousin, or of the domestic concerns of Doubting Castle.

THE STROLLING MANAGER.

As I was walking one morning with Buckthorne near one of the principal theatres, he directed my attention to a group of those equivocal beings that may often be seen hovering about the stage-doors of theatres. They were marvellously ill-favoured in their attire, their coats buttoned up to their chins; yet they wore their hats smartly on one side, and had a certain knowing, dirty-gentlemanlike air, which is common to the subalterns of the drama. Buckthorne knew them well by early experience.

"These," said he, "are the ghosts of departed kings and heroes; fellows who sway sceptres and truncheons; command kingdoms and armies; and after giving away realms and treasures over night, have scarce a shilling to pay for a breakfast in the morning. Yet they have the true vagabond abhorrence of all useful and industrious employment; and they have their pleasures too; one of

which is to lounge in this way in the sunshine, at the stage-door, during rehearsals, and make hackneyed theatrical jokes on all passers-by. Nothing is more traditional and legitimate than the stage. Old scenery, old clothes, old sentiments, old ranting, and old jokes, are handed down from generation to generation; and will probably continue to be so until time shall be no more. Every hanger-on of a theatre becomes a wag by inheritance, and flourishes about at tap-rooms and sixpenny clubs with the property jokes of the green-room."

While amusing ourselves with reconnoitering this group, we noticed one in particular who appeared to be the oracle. He was a weather-beaten veteran, a little bronzed by time and beer, who had no doubt grown grey in the parts of robbers, cardinals, Roman senators, and walking noblemen.

"There is something in the set of that hat, and the turn of that physiognomy, extremely familiar to me," said Buckthorne. He looked a little closer.—"I cannot be mistaken, that must be my old brother of the truncheon, Flimsey, the tragic hero of the Strolling Company."

It was he in fact. The poor fellow showed evident signs that times went hard with him, he was so finely and shabbily dressed. His coat was somewhat threadbare, and of the Lord Townley cut; single-breasted, and scarcely capable of meeting in front of his body, which, from long intimacy, had acquired the symmetry and robustness of a beer barrel. He wore a pair of dingy-white stockinet pantaloons, which had much ado to reach his waistcoat; a great quantity of dirty cravat; and a pair of old russet-coloured tragedy boots.

When his companions had dispersed, Buckthorne drew him aside, and made himself known to him. The tragic veteran could scarcely recognise him, or believe that he was really his quondam associate, "little Gentleman Jack." Buckthorne invited him to a neighbouring coffee-house, to talk over old times; and in the course of a little while, we were put in possession of his history in brief.

He had continued to act the heroes in the strolling company for some time after Buckthorne had left it, or, rather, had been driven from it so abruptly. At length, the manager died, and the troop was thrown into confusion. Every one aspired to the crown, every one was for taking the lead; and the manager's widow, although a tragedy queen, and a brimstone to boot, pronounced it utterly impossible for a woman to keep any control over such a set of tempestuous rascallions.

"Upon this hint, I spoke," said Flimsey. "I stepped forward, and offered my services in the most effectual way. They were accepted. In a week's time I married the widow, and succeeded to the throne. "The funeral baked meats did coldly furnish forth the marriage table," as Hamlet says. But the ghost of my predecessor never haunted me; and I inherited crowns, sceptres,

bowls, daggers, and all the stage trappings and trumpery, not omitting the widow, without the least molestation.

I now led a flourishing life of it; for our company was pretty strong and attractive, and as my wife and I took the heavy parts of tragedy, it was a great saving to the treasury. We carried off the palm from all the rival shows at country fairs; and I assure you we have even drawn full houses, and been applauded by the critics at Bartlemy Fair itself, though we had Astley's troop, the Irish giant, and "the Death of Nelson," in wax-work, to contend against.

I soon began to experience, however, the cares of command. I discovered that there were cabals breaking out in the company, headed by the clown, who, you may recollect, was a terribly peevish, fractious fellow, and always in ill-humour. I had a great mind to turn him off at once, but I could not do without him, for there was not a droller scoundrel on the stage. His very shape was comic, for he had but to turn his back upon the audience, and all the ladies were ready to die with laughing. He felt his importance, and took advantage of it. He would keep the audience in a continual roar, and then come behind the scenes, and fret and fume, and play the very devil. I excused a great deal in him, however, knowing that comic actors are a little prone to this infirmity of temper.

I had another trouble of a nearer and dearer nature to struggle with, which was the affection of my wife. As ill-luck would have it, she took it into her head to be very fond of me, and became intolerably jealous. I could not keep a pretty girl in the company, and hardly dared embrace an ugly one, even when my part required it. I have known her reduce a fine lady to tatters, "to very rags," as Hamlet says, in an instant, and destroy one of the very best dresses in the wardrobe, merely because she saw me kiss her at the side scenes; though I give you my honour it was done merely by way of rehearsal.

This was doubly annoying, because I have a natural liking to pretty faces, and wish to have them about me; and because they are indispensable to the success of a company at a fair, where one has to vie with so many rival theatres. But when once a jealous wife gets a freak in her head, there's no use in talking of interest or any thing else. Egad, sir, I have more than once trembled, when during a fit of her tantrums, she was playing high tragedy, and flourishing her tin dagger on the stage, lest she should give way to her humour, and stab some fancied rival in good earnest.

I went on better, however, than could be expected, considering the weakness of my flesh, and the violence of my rib. I had not a much worse time of it than old Jupiter, whose spouse was continually ferreting out some new intrigue, and making the heavens almost too hot to hold him.

At length, as luck would have it, we were performing at a

country fair, when I understood the theatre of a neighbouring town to be vacant. I had always been desirous to be enrolled in a settled company, and the height of my desire was to get on a par with a brother-in-law, who was the manager of a regular theatre, and who had looked down upon me. Here was an opportunity not to be neglected. I concluded an agreement with the proprietors, and in a few days opened the theatre with great eclat.

Behold me now at the summit of my ambition, "the high top-gallant of my joy," as Romeo says. No longer a chieftain of a wandering tribe, but a monarch of a legitimate throne, and entitled to call even the great potentates of Covent Garden and Drury Lane cousins. You, no doubt, think my happiness complete. Alas, sir! I was one of the most uncomfortable dogs living. No one knows, who has not tried, the miseries of a manager; but above all of a country manager. No one can conceive the contentions and quarrels within doors, the oppressions and vexations from without. I was pestered with the bloods and loungers of a country town, who infested my green-room, and played the mischief among my actresses. But there was no shaking them off. It would have been ruin to affront them; for though troublesome friends, they would have been dangerous enemies. Then there were the village critics and village amateurs, who were continually tormenting me with advice, and getting into a passion if I would not take it; especially the village doctor and the village attorney, who had both been to London occasionally, and knew what acting should be.

I had also to manage as arrant a crew of scapegraces as ever were collected together within the walls of a theatre. I had been obliged to combine my original troop with some of the former troop of the theatre, who were favourites of the public. Here was a mixture that produced perpetual ferment. They were all the time either fighting or frolicking with each other, and I scarcely know which mood was least troublesome. If they quarrelled, every thing went wrong; and if they were friends, they were continually playing off some prank upon each other, or upon me; for I had unhappily acquired among them the character of an easy, good-natured fellow—the worst character that a manager can possess.

Their waggery at times drove me almost crazy; for there is nothing so vexatious as the hackneyed tricks and hoaxes and pleasantries of a veteran band of theatrical vagabonds. I relished them well enough, it is true, while I was merely one of the company, but as manager I found them detestable. They were incessantly bringing some disgrace upon the theatre by their tavern frolics, and their pranks about the country town. All my lectures about the importance of keeping up the dignity of the profession, and the respectability of the company were in vain. The villains could not sympathise with the delicate feelings of a man in station. They even trifled with the seriousness of stage

business. I have had the whole piece interrupted, and a crowded audience of at least twenty-five pounds kept waiting, because the actors had hid away the breeches of Rosalind; and have known Hamlet to stalk solemnly on to deliver his soliloquy, with a dish-clout pinned to his skirts. Such are the baleful consequences of a manager's getting a character for good-nature.

I was intolerably annoyed, too, by the great actors who came down starring, as it is called, from London. Of all baneful influences, keep me from that of a London star. A first-rate actress going the rounds of the country theatres is as bad as a blazing comet whisking about the heavens, and shaking fire and plagues and discords from its tail.

The moment one of these "heavenly bodies" appeared in my horizon, I was sure to be in hot water. My theatre was overrun by provincial dandies, copper-washed counterfeits of Bond-street loungers, who are always proud to be in the train of an actress from town, and anxious to be thought on exceeding good terms with her. It was really a relief to me when some random young nobleman would come in pursuit of the bait, and awe all this small fry at a distance. I have always felt myself more at ease with a nobleman than with the dandy of a country town.

And then the injuries I suffered in my personal dignity and my managerial authority from the visits of these great London actors! 'Sblood, sir, I was no longer master of myself on my throne. I was hectored and lectured in my own green-room, and made an absolute nincompoop on my own stage. There is no tyrant so absolute and capricious as a London star at a country theatre. I dreaded the sight of all of them, and yet if I did not engage them, I was sure of having the public clamorous against me. They drew full houses, and appeared to be making my fortune; but they swallowed up all the profits by their insatiable demands. They were absolute tape-worms to my little theatre; the more it took in the poorer it grew. They were sure to leave me with an exhausted public, empty benches, and a score or two of affronts to settle among the town's folk, in consequence of misunderstandings about the taking of places.

But the worst thing I had to undergo in my managerial career was patronage. Oh, sir! of all things deliver me from the patronage of the great people of a country town. It was my ruin. You must know that this town, though small, was filled with feuds, and parties, and great folks; being a busy little trading and manufacturing town. The mischief was that their greatness was of a kind not to be settled by reference to the court calendar, or college of heraldry; it was therefore the most quarrelsome kind of greatness in existence. You smile, sir, but let me tell you there are no feuds more furious than the frontier feuds which take place in these "debatable lands" of gentility. The most violent dispute that I ever knew in high life was one which occurred at a

country town, on a question of precedence between the ladies of a manufacturer of pins and a manufacturer of needles.

At the town where I was situated there were perpetual altercations of the kind. The head manufacturer's lady, for instance, was at daggers-drawings with the head shopkeeper's, and both were too rich and had too many friends to be treated lightly. The doctor's and lawyer's ladies held their heads still higher; but they in their turn were kept in check by the wife of a country banker, who kept her own carriage; while a masculine widow of cracked character and second-hand fashion, who lived in a large house, and claimed to be in some way related to nobility, looked down upon them all. To be sure, her manners were not over elegant, nor her fortune over large; but then, sir, her blood—oh, her blood carried it all hollow; there was no withstanding a woman with such blood in her veins.

After all, her claims to high connexion were questioned, and she had frequent battles for precedence at balls and assemblies with some of the sturdy dames of the neighbourhood, who stood upon their wealth and their virtue; but then she had two dashing daughters, who dressed as fine as dragons, had as high blood as their mother, and seconded her in everything; so they carried their point with high heads, and everybody hated, abused, and stood in awe of the Fantadlins.

Such was the state of the fashionable world in this self-important little town. Unluckily, I was not as well acquainted with its politics as I should have been. I had found myself a stranger and in great perplexities during my first season; I determined, therefore, to put myself under the patronage of some powerful name, and thus to take the field with the prejudices of the public in my favour. I cast round my thoughts for the purpose, and in an evil hour they fell upon Mrs. Fantadlin. No one seemed to me to have a more absolute sway in the world of fashion. I had always noticed that her party slammed the box-door the loudest at the theatre; had most beaus attending on them, and talked and laughed loudest during the performance; and then the Miss Fantadlins wore always more feathers and flowers than any other ladies; and used quizzing-glasses incessantly. The first evening of my theatre's re-opening, therefore, was announced in staring capitals on the play-bills, as under the patronage of "The Honourable Mrs. Fantadlin."

Sir, the whole community flew to arms! the banker's wife felt her dignity grievously insulted at not having the preference; her husband being high bailiff and the richest man in the place. She immediately issued invitations for a large party, for the night of the performance, and asked many a lady to it whom she never had noticed before. Presume to patronise the theatre! Insufferable! And then for me to dare to term her "The Honourable!" What claim had she to the title forsooth! The fashionable world

had long groaned under the tyranny of the Fantadlins, and were glad to make a common cause against this new instance of assumption. Those, too, who had never before been noticed by the banker's lady were ready to enlist in any quarrel for the honour of her acquaintance. All minor feuds were forgotten. The doctor's lady and the lawyer's lady met together, and the manufacturer's lady and the shopkeeper's lady kissed each other; and all, headed by the banker's lady, voted the theatre a *bore*, and determined to encourage nothing but the Indian Jugglers and Mr. Walker's Eidouranion.

Alas for poor Pillgarlick! I knew little the mischief that was brewing against me. My box-book remained blank; the evening arrived; but no audience. The music struck up to a tolerable pit and gallery, but no fashionables! I peeped anxiously from behind the curtain, but the time passed away; the play was retarded until pit and gallery became furious; and I had to raise the curtain, and play my greatest part in tragedy to "a beggarly account of empty boxes."

It is true, the Fantadlins came late, as was their custom, and entered like a tempest, with a flutter of feathers and red shawls; but they were evidently disconcerted at finding they had no one to admire and envy them, and were enraged at this glaring defection of their fashionable followers. All the beau-monde were engaged at the banker's lady's rout. They remained for some time in solitary and uncomfortable state, and though they had the theatre almost to themselves, yet, for the first time, they talked in whispers. They left the house at the end of the first piece, and I never saw them afterwards.

Such was the rock on which I split. I never got over the patronage of the Fantadlin family. My house was deserted; my actors grew discontented, because they were ill paid; my door became a hammering place for every bailiff in the country; and my wife became more and more shrewish and tormenting the more I wanted comfort.

I tried for a time the usual consolation of a harassed and henpecked man; I took to the bottle, and tried to tipple away my cares, but in vain. I don't mean to decry the bottle; it is no doubt an excellent remedy in many cases, but it did not answer in mine. It cracked my voice, coppered my nose, but neither improved my wife nor my affairs. My establishment became a scene of confusion and peculation. I was considered a ruined man, and of course fair game for every one to pluck at, as every one plunders a sinking ship. Day after day some of the troop deserted, and, like deserting soldiers, carried off their arms and accoutrements with them. In this manner my wardrobe took legs and walked away, my finery strolled all over the country, my swords and daggers glittered in every barn, until, at last, my tailor made "one fell swoop," and carried off three dress-coats, half a dozen doublets,

and nineteen pair of flesh-coloured pantaloons. This was the "be all and the end all" of my fortune. I no longer hesitated what to do. Egad, thought I, since stealing is the order of the day, I'll steal too; so I secretly gathered together the jewels of my wardrobe, packed up a hero's dress in a handkerchief, slung it on the end of a tragedy sword, and quietly stole off at dead of night, "the bell then beating one," leaving my queen and kingdom to the mercy of my rebellious subjects, and my merciless foes the bumbailiffs.

Such, sir, was the "end of all my greatness." I was heartily cured of all passion for governing, and returned once more into the ranks. I had for some time the usual run of an actor's life: I played in various country theatres, at fairs, and in barns; sometimes hard pushed, sometimes flush, until, on one occasion, I came within an ace of making my fortune, and becoming one of the wonders of the age.

I was playing the part of Richard the Third in a country barn, and in my best style; for, to tell the truth, I was a little in liquor, and the critics of the company always observed that I played with most effect when I had a glass too much. There was a thunder of applause when I came to that part where Richard cries for "a horse! a horse!" My cracked voice had always a wonderful effect here; it was like two voices run into one; you would have thought two men had been calling for a horse, or that Richard had called for two horses. And when I flung the taunt at Richmond, "Richard is *hoarse* with calling thee to arms," I thought the barn would have come down about my ears with the raptures of the audience.

The very next morning a person waited upon me at my lodgings. I saw at once he was a gentleman by his dress; for he had a large brooch in his bosom, thick rings on his fingers, and used a quizzing-glass. And a gentleman he proved to be; for I soon ascertained that he was a kept author, or kind of literary tailor to one of the great London theatres; one who worked under the manager's directions, and cut up and cut down plays, and patched and pieced, and new faced, and turned them inside out; in short, he was one of the readiest and greatest writers of the day.

He was now on a foraging excursion in quest of something that might be got up for a prodigy. The theatre, it seems, was in desperate condition—nothing but a miracle could save it. He had seen me act Richard the night before, and had pitched upon me for that miracle. I had a remarkable bluster in my style and swagger in my gait. I certainly differed from all other heroes of the barn: so the thought struck the agent to bring me out as a theatrical wonder; as the restorer of natural and legitimate acting, as the only one who could understand and act Shakspeare rightly.

When he opened his plan I shrunk from it with becoming modesty, for well as I thought of myself, I doubted my competency to such an undertaking.

I hinted at my imperfect knowledge of Shakspeare, having played his characters only after mutilated copies, interlarded with a great deal of my own talk by way of helping memory or heightening the effect.

"So much the better," cried the gentleman with rings on his fingers; "so much the better. New readings, sir!—new readings! Don't study a line—let us have Shakspeare after your own fashion."

"But then my voice was cracked; it could not fill a London theatre."

"So much the better! so much the better! The public is tired of intonation—the *ore rotundo* has had its day. No, sir, your cracked voice is the very thing—spit and splutter, and snap and snarl, and 'play the very dog' about the stage, and you'll be the making of us."

"But then,"—I could not help blushing to the end of my very nose as I said it, but I was determined to be candid;—"but then," added I, "there is one awkward circumstance; I have an unlucky habit—my misfortunes, and the exposures to which one is subjected in country barns, have obliged me now and then to—to—take a drop of something comfortable—and so—and so——."

"What! you drink?" cried the agent eagerly.

I bowed my head in blushing acknowledgment.

"So much the better! so much the better! The irregularities of genius! A sober fellow is common-place. The public like an actor that drinks. Give me your hand, sir. You're the very man to make a dash with."

I still hung back with lingering diffidence, declaring myself unworthy of such praise.

"'Sblood, man," cried he, "no praise at all. You don't imagine *I* think you a wonder; I only want the public to think so. Nothing is so easy as to gull the public, if you only set up a prodigy. Common talent anybody can measure by common rule; but a prodigy sets all rule and measurement at defiance."

These words opened my eyes in an instant: we now came to a proper understanding, less flattering, it is true, to my vanity, but much more satisfactory to my judgment.

It was agreed that I should make my appearance before a London audience, as a dramatic sun just bursting from behind the clouds: one that was to banish all the lesser lights and false fires of the stage. Every precaution was to be taken to possess the public mind at every avenue. The pit was to be packed with sturdy clappers; the newspapers secured by vehement puffers; every theatrical resort to be haunted by hireling talkers. In a word, every engine of theatrical humbug was to be put in action. Wherever I differed from former actors, it was to be maintained that I was right and they were wrong. If I ranted, it was to be pure passion; if I were vulgar, it was to be pronounced a familiar touch of nature;

if I made any queer blunder, it was to be a new reading. If my voice cracked, or I got out in my part, I was only to bounce, and grin, and snarl at the audience, and make any horrible grimace that came into my head, and my admirers were to call it "a great point," and to fall back and shout and yell with rapture.

"In short," said the gentleman with the quizzing-glass, "strike out boldly and bravely: no matter how or what you do, so that it be but odd and strange. If you do but escape pelting the first night, your fortune and the fortune of the theatre is made."

I set off for London, therefore, in company with the kept author, full of new plans and new hopes. I was to be the restorer of Shakspeare and Nature, and the legitimate drama; my very swagger was to be heroic, and my cracked voice the standard of elocution. Alas! sir, my usual luck attended me: before I arrived at the metropolis a rival wonder had appeared; a woman who could dance the slack rope, and run up a cord from the stage to the gallery with fireworks all round her. She was seized on by the manager with avidity. She was the saving of the great national theatre for the season. Nothing was talked of but Madame Saqui's fireworks and flesh-coloured pantaloons; and Nature, Shakspeare, the legitimate drama, and poor Pillgarlick, were completely left in the lurch.

When Madame Saqui's performance grew stale, other wonders succeeded: horses, and harlequinades, and mummery of all kinds; until another dramatic prodigy was brought forward to play the very game for which I had been intended. I called upon the kept author for an explanation, but he was deeply engaged in writing a melo-drama or a pantomime, and was extremely testy on being interrupted in his studies. However, as the theatre was in some measure pledged to provide for me, the manager acted, according to the usual phrase, "like a man of honour," and I received an appointment in the corps. It had been a turn of a die whether I should be Alexander the Great or Alexander the coppersmith—the latter carried it. I could not be put at the head of the drama, so I was put at the tail of it. In other words, I was enrolled among the number of what are called *useful men;* those who enact soldiers, senators, and Banquo's shadowy line. I was perfectly satisfied with my lot; for I have always been a bit of a philosopher. If my situation was not splendid, it at least was secure; and in fact I have seen half a dozen prodigies appear, dazzle, burst like bubbles and pass away, and yet here I am, snug, unenvied and unmolested, at the foot of the profession.

You may smile; but let me tell you, we "useful men" are the only comfortable actors on the stage. We are safe from hisses, and below the hope of applause. We fear not the success of rivals, nor dread the critic's pen. So long as we get the words of our parts, and they are not often many, it is all we care for. We have our own merriment, our own friends, and our own admirers—for every actor has his friends and admirers, from the highest to the

lowest. The first-rate actor dines with the noble amateur, and entertains a fashionable table with scraps and songs and theatrical slip-slop. The second-rate actors have their second-rate friends and admirers, with whom they likewise spout tragedy and talk slip-slop—and so down even to us; who have our friends and admirers among spruce clerks and aspiring apprentices—who treat us to a dinner now and then, and enjoy at tenth hand the same scraps and songs and slip-slop that have been served up by our more fortunate brethren at the tables of the great.

I now, for the first time in my theatrical life, experience what true pleasure is. I have known enough of notoriety to pity the poor devils who are called favourites of the public. I would rather be a kitten in the arms of a spoiled child, to be one moment patted and pampered and the next moment thumped over the head with the spoon. I smile to see our leading actors fretting themselves with envy and jealousy about a trumpery renown, questionable in its quality, and uncertain in its duration. I laugh too, though of course in my sleeve, at the bustle and importance, and trouble and perplexities of our manager—who is harassing himself to death in the hopeless effort to please every body.

I have found among my fellow-subalterns two or three quondam managers, who like myself have wielded the sceptres of country theatres, and we have many a sly joke together at the expense of the manager and the public. Sometimes, too, we meet like deposed and exiled kings, talk over the events of our respective reigns, moralize over a tankard of ale, and laugh at the humbug of the great and little world; which, I take it, is the essence of practical philosophy.

Thus end the anecdotes of Buckthorne and his friends. It grieves me much that I could not procure from him further particulars of his history, and especially of that part of it which passed in town. He had evidently seen much of literary life; and, as he had never risen to eminence in letters, and yet was free from the gall of disappointment, I had hoped to gain some candid intelligence concerning his contemporaries. The testimony of such an honest chronicler would have been particularly valuable at the present time; when, owing to the extreme fecundity of the press, and the thousand anecdotes, criticisms, and biographical sketches that are daily poured forth concerning public characters, it is extremely difficult to get at any truth concerning them.

He was always, however, excessively reserved and fastidious on this point, at which I very much wondered, authors in general appearing to think each other fair game, and being ready to serve each other up for the amusement of the public.

A few mornings after hearing the history of the ex-manager, I was surprised by a visit from Buckthorne before I was out of bed. He was dressed for travelling.

"Give me joy! give me joy!" said he, rubbing his hands with the utmost glee, "my great expectations are realized!"

I gazed at him with a look of wonder and inquiry.

"My booby cousin is dead!" cried he; "may he rest in peace! he nearly broke his neck in a fall from his horse in a fox-chase. By good luck he lived long enough to make his will. He has made me his heir, partly out of an odd feeling of retributive justice, and partly because, as he says, none of his own family nor friends know how to enjoy such an estate. I'm off to the country to take possession. I've done with authorship. That for the critics!" said he, snapping his finger. "Come down to Doubting Castle, when I get settled, and, egad, I'll give you a rouse." So saying, he shook me heartily by the hand, and bounded off in high spirits.

A long time elapsed before I heard from him again. Indeed, it was but lately that I received a letter, written in the happiest of moods. He was getting the estate in fine order; every thing went to his wishes; and what was more, he was married to Sacharissa, who it seems had always entertained an ardent though secret attachment for him, which he fortunately discovered just after coming to his estate.

"I find," said he, "you are a little given to the sin of authorship, which I renounce: if the anecdotes I have given you of my story are of any interest, you may make use of them; but come down to Doubting Castle, and see how we live, and I'll give you my whole London life over a social glass; and a rattling history it shall be about authors and reviewers."

If ever I visit Doubting Castle and get the history he promises, the public shall be sure to hear of it.

PART III.

THE ITALIAN BANDITTI.

THE INN AT TERRACINA.

Crack! crack! crack! crack! crack!

"Here comes the estafette from Naples," said mine host of the inn at Terracina; "bring out the relay."

The estafette came galloping up the road according to custom, brandishing over his head a short-handled whip, with a long, knotted lash, every smack of which made a report like a pistol. He was a tight, square-set young fellow, in the usual uniform: a smart blue coat, ornamented with facings and gold lace, but so short behind as to reach scarcely below his waistband, and cocked up not unlike the tail of a wren; a cocked hat edged with gold lace; a pair of stiff riding-boots; but, instead of the usual leathern breeches, he had a fragment of a pair of drawers, that scarcely furnished an apology for modesty to hide behind.

The estafette galloped up to the door, and jumped from his horse.

"A glass of rosolio, a fresh horse, and a pair of breeches," said he, "and quickly, *per l'amor di Dio*, I am behind my time, and must be off!"

"San Gennaro!" replied the host; "why where hast thou left thy garment?"

"Among the robbers between this and Fondi,"

"What, rob an estafette! I never heard of such folly. What could they hope to get from thee?"

"My leather breeches!" replied the estafette. "They were bran new, and shone like gold, and hit the fancy of the captain."

"Well, these fellows grow worse and worse. To meddle with an estafette! and that merely for the sake of a pair of leather breeches!"

The robbing of the government messenger seemed to strike the host with more astonishment than any other enormity that had taken place on the road; and, indeed, it was the first time so wanton an outrage had been committed; the robbers generally taking care not to meddle with any thing belonging to government.

The estafette was by this time equipped, for he had not lost an instant in making his preparations while talking. The relay was ready; the rosolio tossed off; he grasped the reins and the stirrup.

"Were there many robbers in the band?" said a handsome, dark young man, stepping forward from the door of the inn.

"As formidable a band as ever I saw," said the estafette, springing into the saddle.

"Are they cruel to travellers?" said a beautiful young Venetian lady, who had been hanging on the gentleman's arm.

"Cruel, signora!" echoed the estafette, giving a glance at the lady as he put spurs to his horse. "Corpo di Bacco! They stiletto all the men; and, as to the women——" Crack! crack! crack! crack! crack!—The last words were drowned in the smacking of the whip, and away galloped the estafette along the road to the Pontine marshes.

"Holy Virgin!" ejaculated the fair Venetian, "what will become of us!"

The inn of which we are speaking stands just outside of the walls of Terracina, under a vast precipitous height of rocks, crowned with the ruins of the castle of Theodric the Goth. The situation of Terracina is remarkable. It is a little, ancient, lazy Italian town, on the frontiers of the Roman territory. There seems to be an idle pause in everything about the place. The Mediterranean spreads before it—that sea without flux or reflux. The port is without a sail, excepting that once in a while a solitary felucca may be seen disgorging its holy cargo of baccala, or codfish, the meagre provision for the quaresima, or Lent. The inhabitants are apparently a listless, heedless race, as people of soft sunny climates are apt to be; but under this passive, indolent exterior are said to lurk dangerous qualities. They are supposed by many to be little better than the banditti of the neighbouring mountains, and indeed to hold a secret correspondence with them. The solitary watch-towers, erected here and there along the coast, speak of pirates and corsairs that hover about these shores; while the low huts, as stations for soldiers, which dot the distant road, as it winds up through an olive grove, intimate that in the ascent, there is a danger for the traveller, and facility for the bandit. Indeed, it is between this town and Fondi that the road to Naples is most infested by banditti. It has several winding and solitary places, where the robbers are enabled to see the traveller from a distance, from the brows of the hills or impending precipices, and to lie in wait for him at lonely and difficult passes.

The Italian robbers are a desperate class of men, that have almost formed themselves into an order of society. They wear a kind of uniform, or rather costume, which openly designates their profession. This is probably done to diminish its skulking, lawless character, and to give it something of a military air in the eyes of the common people; or, perhaps, to catch by outward show and finery the fancies of the young men of the villages, and thus to gain recruits. Their dresses are often very rich and picturesque. They wear jackets and breeches of bright colours,

sometimes gaily embroidered; their breasts are covered with medals and relics; their hats are broad-brimmed, with conical crowns, decorated with feathers, or variously-coloured ribands; their hair is sometimes gathered in silk nets; they wear a kind of sandal of cloth or leather, bound round the legs with thongs, and extremely flexible, to enable them to scramble with ease and celerity among the mountain precipices; a broad belt of cloth, or a sash of silk net, is stuck full of pistols and stilettos; a carbine is slung at the back; while about them is generally thrown, in a negligent manner, a great dingy mantle, which serves as a protection in storms, or a bed in their bivouacs among the mountains.

They range over a great extent of wild country, along the chain of Apennines, bordering on different states; they know all the difficult passes, the short cuts for retreat, and the impracticable forests of the mountain summits, where no force dare follow them. They are secure of the good-will of the inhabitants of those regions, a poor and semi-barbarous race, whom they never disturb and often enrich. Indeed, they are considered as a sort of illegitimate heroes among the mountain villages, and in certain frontier towns where they dispose of their plunder. Thus countenanced, and sheltered, and secure in the fastnesses of their mountains, the robbers have set the weak police of the Italian states at defiance. It is in vain that their names and descriptions are posted on the doors of country churches, and rewards offered for them alive or dead; the villagers are either too much awed by the terrible instances of vengeance inflicted by the brigands, or have too good an understanding with them to be their betrayers. It is true they are now and then hunted and shot down like beasts of prey by the *gens-d'armes*, their heads put in iron cages, and stuck upon posts by the road-side, or their limbs hung up to blacken in the trees near the places where they have committed their atrocities; but these ghastly spectacles only serve to make some dreary pass of the road still more dreary, and to dismay the traveller, without deterring the bandit.

At the time that the estafette made his sudden appearance, almost *in cuerpo*, as has been mentioned, the audacity of the robbers had risen to an unparalleled height. They had laid villas under contribution; they had sent messages into country towns, to tradesmen and rich burghers, demanding supplies of money, of clothing, or even of luxuries, with menaces of vengeance in case of refusal. They had their spies and emissaries in every town, village, and inn, along the principal roads, to give them notice of the movements and quality of travellers. They had plundered carriages, carried people of rank and fortune into the mountains, and obliged them to write for heavy ransoms, and had committed outrages on females who had fallen into their hands.

Such was briefly the state of the robbers, or rather such was the account of the rumours prevalent concerning them, when the scene

took place at the inn of Terracina. The dark handsome young man, and the Venetian lady incidentally mentioned, had arrived early that afternoon in a private carriage drawn by mules, and attended by a single servant. They had been recently married, were spending the honeymoon in travelling through these delicious countries, and were on their way to visit a rich aunt of the bride at Naples.

The lady was young, and tender, and timid. The stories she had heard along the road had filled her with apprehension, not more for herself than for her husband; for though she had been married almost a month, she still loved him almost to idolatry. When she reached Terracina, the rumours of the road had increased to an alarming magnitude; and the sight of two robbers' skulls, grinning in iron cages, on each side of the old gateway of the town, brought her to a pause. Her husband had tried in vain to reassure her; they had lingered all the afternoon at the inn, until it was too late to think of starting that evening, and the parting words of the estafette completed her affright.

"Let us return to Rome," said she, putting her arm within her husband's, and drawing towards him as if for protection.—"Let us return to Rome, and give up this visit to Naples."

"And give up the visit to your aunt too?" said the husband.

"Nay—what is my aunt in comparison with your safety?" said she, looking up tenderly in his face.

There was something in her tone and manner that showed she really was thinking more of her husband's safety at the moment than of her own; and being so recently married, and a match of pure affection too, it is very possible that she was: at least her husband thought so. Indeed any one who has heard the sweet musical tone of a Venetian voice, and the melting tenderness of a Venetian phrase, and felt the soft witchery of a Venetian eye, would not wonder at the husband's believing whatever they professed. He clasped the white hand that had been laid within his, put his arm round the slender waist, and drawing her fondly to his bosom, "This night, at least," said he, "we will pass at Terracina."

Crack! crack! crack! crack! crack! Another apparition of the road attracted the attention of mine host and his guests. From the direction of the Pontine marshes, a carriage, drawn by half a dozen horses, came driving at a furious rate; the postilions smacking their whips like mad, as is the case when conscious of the greatness or of the munificence of their fare. It was a landaulet with a servant mounted on the dickey. The compact, highly-finished, yet proudly simple construction of the carriage; the quantity of neat, well-arranged trunks and conveniences; the loads of box-coats on the dickey; the fresh, burly, bluff-looking face of the master at the window; and the ruddy, round-headed servant, in close-cropped hair, short coat, drab breeches, and long gaiters, all proclaimed at once that this was the equipage of an Englishman.

"Horses to Fondi," said the Englishman, as the landlord came bowing to the carriage door.

"Would not his Excellenza alight, and take some refreshments?"

"No—he did not mean to eat until he got to Fondi."

"But the horses will be some time in getting ready."

"Ah! that's always the way; nothing but delay in this cursed country."

"If his Excellenza would only walk into the house——"

"No, no, no!—I tell you no!—I want nothing but horses, and as quick as possible. John, see that the horses are got ready, and don't let us be kept here an hour or two. Tell him if we're delayed over the time, I'll lodge a complaint with the post-master."

John touched his hat, and set off to obey his master's orders with the taciturn obedience of an English servant.

In the meantime the Englishman got out of the carriage, and walked up and down before the inn with his hands in his pockets, taking no notice of the crowd of idlers who were gazing at him and his equipage. He was tall, stout, and well made; dressed with neatness and precision; wore a travelling cap of the colour of gingerbread; and had rather an unhappy expression about the corners of his mouth: partly from not having yet made his dinner, and partly from not having been able to get on at a greater rate than seven miles an hour. Not that he had any other cause for haste than an Englishman's usual hurry to get to the end of a journey; or, to use the regular phrase, "to get on." Perhaps, too, he was a little sore from having been fleeced at every stage.

After some time, the servant returned from the stable with a look of some perplexity,

"Are the horses ready, John?"

"No, sir—I never saw such a place. There's no getting anything done. I think your honour had better step into the house and get something to eat; it will be a long while before we get to Fundy."

"D—n the house—it's a mere trick—I'll not eat anything, just to spite them," said the Englishman, still more crusty at the prospect of being so long without his dinner.

"They say your honour's very wrong," said John, "to set off at this late hour. The road's full of highwaymen."

"Mere tales to get custom."

"The estafette which passed us was stopped by a whole gang," said John, increasing his emphasis with each additional piece of information.

"I don't believe a word of it."

"They robbed him of his breeches," said John, giving at the same time a hitch to his own waistband.

"All humbug!"

Here the dark handsome young man stepped forward, and addressing the Englishman very politely, in broken English, invited him to partake of a repast he was about to make.

"Thank'ee," said the Englishman, thrusting his hands deeper into his pockets, and casting a slight side-glance of suspicion at the young man, as if he thought, from his civility, he must have a design upon his purse.

"We shall be most happy, if you will do us the favour," said the lady in her soft Venetian dialect. There was a sweetness in her accents that was most persuasive. The Englishman cast a look upon her countenance: her beauty was still more eloquent. His features instantly relaxed. He made a polite bow. "With great pleasure, Signora," said he.

In short, the eagerness to "get on" was suddenly slackened; the determination to famish himself as far as Fondi, by way of punishing the landlord, was abandoned; John chose an apartment in the inn for his master's reception; and preparations were made to remain there until morning.

The carriage was unpacked of such of its contents as were indispensable for the night. There was the usual parade of trunks and writing-desks, and portfolios and dressing-boxes, and those other oppressive conveniences which burden a comfortable man. The observant loiterers about the inn-door, wrapped up in great dirt-coloured cloaks, with only a hawk's eye uncovered, made many remarks to each other on this quantity of luggage that seemed enough for an army. The domestics of the inn talked with wonder of the splendid dressing-case, with its gold and silver furniture, that was spread out on the toilet-table, and the bag of gold that chinked as it was taken out of the trunk. The strange *Milor's* wealth, and the treasures he carried about him, were the talk, that evening, over all Terracina.

The Englishman took some time to make his ablutions and arrange his dress for table; and, after considerable labour and effort in putting himself at his ease, made his appearance with stiff white cravat, his clothes free from the least speck of dust, and adjusted with precision. He made a civil bow on entering, in the unprofessing English way, which the fair Venetian, accustomed to the complimentary salutations of the continent, considered extremely cold.

The supper, as it was termed by the Italian, or dinner, as the Englishman called it, was now served: heaven and earth, and the waters under the earth, had been moved to furnish it; for there were birds of the air, and beasts of the field, and fish of the sea. The Englishman's servant, too, had turned the kitchen topsy-turvy in his zeal to cook his master a beefsteak; and made his appearance loaded with ketchup, and soy, and Cayenne pepper, and Harvey sauce, and a bottle of port wine from that warehouse, the carriage, in which his master seemed desirous of carrying England about the world with him. Indeed the repast was one of those Italian farragoes which require a little qualifying. The tureen of soup was a black sea, with livers, and limbs, and fragments

of all kinds of birds and beasts floating like wrecks about it. A meagre winged animal, which my host called a delicate chicken, had evidently died of a consumption. The macaroni was smoked. The beefsteak was tough buffalo's flesh. There was what appeared to be a dish of stewed eels, of which the Englishman ate with great relish; but had nearly refunded them when told that they were vipers, caught among the rocks of Terracina, and esteemed a great delicacy.

Nothing, however, conquers a traveller's spleen sooner than eating, whatever may be the cookery; and nothing brings him into good humour with his company sooner than eating together: the Englishman, therefore, had not half finished his repast and his bottle, before he began to think the Venetian a very tolerable fellow for a foreigner, and his wife almost handsome enough to be an Englishwoman.

In the course of the repast, the usual topics of travellers were discussed, and among others the reports of robbers, which harassed the mind of the fair Venetian. The landlord and waiter dipped into the conversation with that familiarity permitted on the continent, and served up so many bloody tales as they served up the dishes, that they almost frightened away the poor lady's appetite.

The Englishman, who had a national antipathy to everything technically called "humbug," listened to them all with a certain screw of the mouth, expressive of incredulity. There was the well-known story of the school of Terracina, captured by the robbers; and one of the scholars coolly massacred, in order to bring the parents to terms for the ransom of the rest. And another, of a gentleman of Rome who received his son's ear in a letter, with information that his son would be remitted to him in this way, by instalments, until he paid the required ransom.

The fair Venetian shuddered as she heard these tales; and the landlord, like a true narrator of the terrible, doubled the dose when he saw how it operated. He was just proceeding to relate the misfortunes of a great English lord and his family, when the Englishman, tired of his volubility, interrupted him, and pronounced these accounts to be mere travellers' tales, or the exaggerations of ignorant peasants and designing innkeepers. The landlord was indignant at the doubt levelled at his stories, and the innuendo levelled at his cloth; he cited, in corroboration, half a dozen tales still more terrible.

"I don't believe a word of them," said the Englishman.

"But the robbers have been tried and executed!"

"All a farce!"

"But their heads are stuck up along the road!"

"Old skulls accumulated during a century."

The landlord muttered to himself as he went out at the door, "San Gennaro! quanto sono singolari questi Inglesi!"

A fresh hubbub outside of the inn announced the arrival of more

travellers; and from the variety of voices, or rather of clamours, the clattering of hoofs, the rattling of wheels, and the general uproar both within and without, the arrival seemed to be numerous.

It was, in fact, the procaccio and its convoy; a kind of caravan which sets out on certain days for the transportation of merchandise, with an escort of soldiery to protect it from the robbers. Travellers avail themselves of its protection, and a long file of carriages generally accompany it.

A considerable time elapsed before either landlord or waiter returned; being hurried hither and thither by that tempest of noise and bustle which takes place in an Italian inn on the arrival of any considerable accession of custom. When mine host reappeared, there was a smile of triumph on his countenance.

"Perhaps," said he, as he cleared the table, "perhaps signor has not heard of what has happened?"

"What?" said the Englishman, dryly.

'Why, the procaccio has brought accounts of fresh exploits of the robbers."

"Pish!"

"There's more news of the English Milor and his family," said the host exultingly.

"An English lord? What English lord?"

"Milor Popkin."

"Lord Popkins? I never heard of such a title!"

"O sicuro! a great nobleman, who passed through here lately with mi ladi and her daughters. A magnifico, one of the grand counsellors of London, an almanno!"

"Almanno—almanno?—tut—he means alderman."

"Sicuro—Aldermanno Popkin, and the Principessa Popkin, and the Signorine Popkin?" said mine host, triumphantly.

He now put himself into an attitude, and would have launched into a full detail, had he not been thwarted by the Englishman, who seemed determined neither to credit nor indulge him in his stories, but dryly motioned for him to clear away the table.

An Italian tongue, however, is not easily checked; that of mine host continued to wag with increasing volubility, as he conveyed the relics of the repast out of the room; and the last that could be distinguished of his voice, as it died away along the corridor, was the iteration of the favourite word, Popkin—Popkin—Popkin—pop—pop—pop.

The arrival of the procaccio had, indeed, filled the house with stories, as it had with guests. The Englishman and his companions walked after supper up and down the large hall, or common room of the inn, which ran through the centre of the building. It was spacious, and somewhat dirty, with tables placed in various parts, at which groups of travellers were seated; while others strolled about, waiting, in famished impatience, for their evening's meal.

It was a heterogeneous assemblage of people of all ranks and

countries, who had arrived in all kinds of vehicles. Though distinct knots of travellers, yet the travelling together, under one common escort, had jumbled them into a certain degree of companionship on the road; besides, on the continent travellers are always familiar, and nothing is more motley than the groups which gather casually together in sociable conversation in the public rooms of inns.

The formidable number, and formidable guard of the procaccio had prevented any molestation from banditti; but every party of travellers had its tale of wonder, and one carriage vied with another in its budget of assertions and surmises. Fierce, whiskered faces had been seen peering over the rocks; carbines and stilettos gleaming from among the bushes; suspicious-looking fellows, with flapped hats, and scowling eyes, had occasionally reconnoitred a straggling carriage, but had disappeared on seeing the guard.

The fair Venetian listened to all these stories with that avidity with which we always pamper any feeling of alarm; even the Englishman began to feel interested in the common topic, and desirous of getting more correct information than mere flying reports. Conquering, therefore, the shyness which is prone to keep an Englishman solitary in crowds, he approached one of the talking groups, the oracle of which was a tall, thin Italian, with long aquiline nose, a high forehead, and lively prominent eye, beaming from under a green velvet travelling cap, with gold tassel. He was of Rome, a surgeon by profession, a poet by choice, and something of an improvisatore.

In the present instance, however, he was talking in plain prose, but holding forth with the fluency of one who talks well, and likes to exert his talent. A question or two from the Englishman drew copious replies: for an Englishman sociable among strangers is regarded as a phenomenon on the continent, and always treated with attention for the rarity's sake. The improvisatore gave much the same account of the banditti that I have already furnished.

"But why does not the police exert itself, and root them out?" demanded the Englishman.

"Because the police is too weak, and the banditti are too strong," replied the other. "To root them out would be a more difficult task than you imagine. They are connected and almost identified with the mountain peasantry and the people of the villages. The numerous bands have an understanding with each other, and with the country round. A gendarme cannot stir without their being aware of it. They have their scouts everywhere, who lurk about towns, villages, and inns, mingle in every crowd, and pervade every place of resort. I should not be surprised if some one should be supervising us at this moment."

The fair Venetian looked round fearfully, and turned pale.

Here the improvisatore was interrupted by a lively Neapolitan lawyer.

"By the way," said he, "I recollect a little adventure of a learned doctor, a friend of mine, which happened in this very neighbourhood, not far from the ruins of Theodric's Castle, which are on the top of those great rocky heights above the town."

A wish was, of course, expressed to hear the adventure of the doctor by all, excepting the improvisatore, who, being fond of talking and of hearing himself talk, and accustomed, moreover, to harangue without interruption, looked rather annoyed at being checked when in full career. The Neapolitan, however, took no notice of his chagrin, but related the following anecdote.

THE ADVENTURE OF THE LITTLE ANTIQUARY.

My friend, the doctor, was a thorough antiquary; a little rusty, musty old fellow, always groping among ruins. He relished a building as you Englishmen relish a cheese,—the more mouldy and crumbling it was, the more it suited his taste. A shell of an old nameless temple, or the cracked walls of a broken-down amphitheatre, would throw him into raptures; and he took more delight in these crusts and cheese-parings of antiquity, than in the best-conditioned modern palaces.

He was a curious collector of coins also, and had just gained an accession of wealth that almost turned his brain. He had picked up, for instance, several Roman Consulars, half a Roman As, two Punics, which had doubtless belonged to the soldiers of Hannibal, having been found on the very spot where they had encamped among the Apennines. He had, moreover, one Samnite, struck after the Social War, and a Philistis, a queen that never existed; but, above all, he valued himself upon a coin, indescribable to any but the initiated in these matters, bearing a cross on one side, and a pegasus on the other, and which, by some antiquarian logic, the little man adduced as an historical document, illustrating the progress of Christianity.

All these precious coins he carried about him in a leathern purse, buried deep in a pocket of his little black breeches.

The last maggot he had taken into his brain, was to hunt after the ancient cities of the Pelasgi, which are said to exist to this day among the mountains of the Abruzzi, but about which a singular degree of obscurity prevails.* He had made many disco-

* Among the many fond speculations of antiquaries is that of the existence of traces of the ancient Pelasgian cities in the Apennines; and many a wistful eye is cast by the traveller, versed in antiquarian lore, at the richly-wooded mountains of the Abruzzi, as a forbidden fairy land of research. These spots, so beautiful, yet so inaccessible, from the rudeness of their inhabitants and the hordes of banditti which infest them, are a region of fable to the learned. Sometimes a wealthy virtuoso, whose purse and whose consequence could command a military escort, has penetrated to some individual point among the mountains: and sometimes a wandering artist or student, under protection of poverty or insignificance, has brought away some vague account, only calculated to give a keener edge to curiosity and conjecture.

By those who maintain the existence of the Pelasgian cities, it is affirmed, that the formation of the different kingdoms in the Peloponnesus gradually caused

veries concerning them, and had recorded a great many valuable notes and memorandums on the subject, in a voluminous book, which he always carried about with him, either for the purpose of frequent reference, or through fear lest the precious document should fall into the hands of brother antiquaries. He had, therefore, a large pocket in the skirt of his coat, where he bore about this inestimable tome, banging against his rear as he walked.

Thus heavily laden with the spoils of antiquity, the good little man, during a sojourn at Terracina, mounted one day the rocky cliffs which overhang the town, to visit the castle of Theodric. He was groping about the ruins towards the hour of sunset, buried in his reflections, his wits no doubt wool-gathering among the Goths and Romans, when he heard footsteps behind him.

He turned, and beheld five or six young fellows, of rough, saucy demeanour, clad in a singular manner, half peasant, half huntsman, with carbines in their hands. Their whole appearance and carriage left him no doubt into what company he had fallen.

The doctor was a feeble little man, poor in look, and poorer in purse. He had but little gold or silver to be robbed of; but then he had his curious ancient coin in his breeches pocket. He had, moreover, certain other valuables, such as an old silver watch, thick as a turnip, with figures on it large enough for a clock; and a set of seals at the end of a steel chain, dangling half way down to his knees. All these were of precious esteem, being family relics. He had also a seal-ring, a veritable antique intaglio, that covered half his knuckles. It was a Venus, which the old man almost worshipped with the zeal of a voluptuary. But what he most valued was his inestimable collection of hints relative to the Pelasgian cities, which he would gladly have given all the money in his pocket to have had safe at the bottom of his trunk in Terracina.

However, he plucked up a stout heart, at least as stout a heart as he could, seeing that he was but a puny little man at the best of times. So he wished the hunters a "buon giorno." They returned his salutation, giving the old gentleman a sociable slap on the back that made his heart leap into his throat.

the expulsion thence of the Pelasgi; but that their great migration may be dated from the finishing the wall round Acropolis, and that at this period they came to Italy. To these, in the spirit of theory, they would ascribe the introduction of the elegant arts into the country. It is evident, however, that, as barbarians flying before the first dawn of civilization, they could bring little with them superior to the inventions of the aborigines, and nothing that would have survived to the antiquarian through such a lapse of ages. It would appear more probable, that these cities, improperly termed Pelasgian, were coeval with many that have been discovered. The romantic Aricia, built by Hippolytus before the siege of Troy, and the poetic Tibur, Æsculate and Procnes, built by Telegonus after the dispersion of the Greeks;—these, lying contiguous to inhabited and cultivated spots, have been discovered. There are others, too, on the ruins of which the later and more civilized Grecian colonists have ingrafted themselves, and which have become known by their merits or their medals. But that there are many still undiscovered, imbedded in the Abruzzi, it is the delight of the antiquarians to fancy. Strange that such a virgin soil for research, such an unknown realm of knowledge, should at this day remain in the very centre of hackneyed Italy!

They fell into conversation, and walked for some time together among the heights, the doctor wishing them all the while at the bottom of the crater of Vesuvius. At length they came to a small osteria on the mountain, where they proposed to enter and have a cup of wine together; the doctor consented, though he would as soon have been invited to drink hemlock.

One of the gang remained sentinel at the door; the others swaggered into the house, stood their guns in the corner of the room, and each drawing a pistol or stiletto out of his belt, laid it upon the table. They now drew benches round the board, called lustily for wine, and, hailing the doctor as though he had been a boon companion of long standing, insisted upon his sitting down and making merry.

The worthy man complied with forced grimace, but with fear and trembling; sitting uneasily on the edge of his chair, eyeing ruefully the black-muzzled pistols, and cold naked stilettos, and supping down heartburn with every drop of liquor. His new comrades, however, pushed the bottle bravely, and plied him vigorously. They sang, they laughed; told excellent stories of their robberies and combats, mingled with many ruffian jokes; and the little doctor was fain to laugh at all their cut-throat pleasantries, though his heart was dying away at the very bottom of his bosom.

By their own account, they were young men from the villages, who had recently taken up this line of life out of the wild caprice of youth. They talked of their murderous exploits as a sportsman talks of his amusements: to shoot down a traveller seemed of little more consequence to them than to shoot a hare. They spoke with rapture of the glorious roving life they led, free as birds; here to-day, gone to-morrow; ranging the forests, climbing the rocks, scouring the valleys; the world their own wherever they could lay hold of it; full purses—merry companions—pretty women. The little antiquary got fuddled with their talk and their wine, for they did not spare bumpers. He half forgot his fears, his seal-ring, and his family-watch; even the treatise on the Pelasgian cities, which was warming under him, for a time faded from his memory in the glowing picture that they drew. He declares that he no longer wonders at the prevalence of this robber mania among the mountains; for he felt at the time, that, had he been a young man, and a strong man, and had there been no danger of the galleys in the background, he should have been half tempted himself to turn bandit.

At length the hour of separating arrived. The Doctor was suddenly called to himself and his fears by seeing the robbers resume their weapons. He now quaked for his valuables, and, above all, for his antiquarian treatise. He endeavoured, however, to look cool and unconcerned; and drew from out his deep pocket a long, lank, leathern purse, far gone in consumption, at the bottom of which a few coin chinked with the trembling of his hand.

The chief of the party observed his movement, and laying his

hand upon the antiquary's shoulder, "Harkee! Signor Dottore!" said he, "we have drunk together as friends and comrades; let us part as such. We understand you. We know who and what you are, for we know who everybody is that sleeps at Terracina, or that puts foot upon the road. You are a rich man, but you carry all your wealth in your head: we cannot get at it, and we should not know what to do with it if we could. I see you are uneasy about your ring; but don't worry yourself, it is not worth taking; you think it an antique, but it's a counterfeit—a mere sham."

Here the ire of the antiquary rose: the Doctor forgot himself in his zeal for the character of his ring. Heaven and earth! his Venus a sham! Had they pronounced the wife of his bosom "no better than she should be," he could not have been more indignant. He fired up in vindication of his intaglio.

"Nay, nay," continued the robber, "we have no time to dispute about it; value it as you please. Come, you're a brave little old signor—one more cup of wine, and we'll pay the reckoning. No compliments—you shall not pay a grain—you are our guest—I insist upon it. So—now make the best of your way back to Terracina; it's growing late. Buono viaggio! And harkee! take care how you wander among these mountains,—you may not always fall into such good company."

They shouldered their guns; sprang gaily up the rocks; and the little Doctor hobbled back to Terracina, rejoicing that the robbers had left his watch, his coins, and his treatise, unmolested; but still indignant that they should have pronounced the Venus an impostor.

The improvisatore had shown many symptoms of impatience during this recital. He saw his theme in danger of being taken out of his hands, which to an able talker is always a grievance, but to an improvisatore is an absolute calamity: and then for it to be taken away by a Neapolitan, was still more vexatious; the inhabitants of the different Italian states having an implacable jealousy of each other in all things, great and small. He took advantage of the first pause of the Neapolitan to catch hold again of the thread of the conversation.

"As I observed before," said he, "the prowlings of the banditti are so extensive; they are so much in league with one another, and so interwoven with various ranks of society——"

"For that matter," said the Neapolitan, "I have heard that your government has had some understanding with those gentry; or, at least, has winked at their misdeeds."

"My government?" said the Roman, impatiently.

"Ay, they say that Cardinal Gonsalvi—"

"Hush!" said the Roman, holding up his finger, and rolling his large eyes about the room.

"Nay, I only repeat what I heard commonly rumoured in Rome," replied the Neapolitan, sturdily. "It was openly said that the

cardinal had been up to the mountains, and had an interview with some of the chiefs. And I have been told, moreover, that while honest people have been kicking their heels in the cardinal's antechamber waiting by the hour for admittance, one of those stiletto-looking fellows has elbowed his way through the crowd, and entered without ceremony into the cardinal's presence."

"I know," observed the improvisatore, "that there have been such reports, and it is not impossible that government may have made use of these men at particular periods: such as at the time of your late abortive revolution, when your carbonari were so busy with their machinations all over the country. The information which such men could collect, who were familiar, not merely with the recesses and secret places of the mountains, but also with the dark and dangerous recesses of society; who knew every suspicious character, and all his movements and all his lurkings; in a word, who knew all that was plotting in a world of mischief;—the utility of such men as instruments in the hands of government was too obvious to be overlooked; and Cardinal Gonsalvi, as a politic statesman, may, perhaps, have made use of them. Besides, he knew that, with all their atrocities, the robbers were always respectful towards the church, and devout in their religion."

"Religion! religion!" echoed the Englishman.

"Yes, religion," repeated the Roman. "They have each their patron saint. They will cross themselves and say their prayers, whenever, in their mountain haunts, they hear the matin or the Ave-Maria bells sounding from the valleys; and will often descend from their retreats, and run imminent risks to visit some favourite shrine. I recollect an instance in point.

"I was one evening in the village of Frascati, which stands on the beautiful brow of a hill rising from the Campagna, just below the Abruzzi mountains. The people, as is usual in fine evenings in our Italian towns and villages, were recreating themselves in the open air, and chatting in groups in the public square. While I was conversing with a knot of friends, I noticed a tall fellow, wrapped in a great mantle, passing across the square, but skulking along the dusk, as if anxious to avoid observation. The people drew back as he passed. It was whispered to me that he was a notorious bandit."

"But why was he not immediately seized?" said the Englishman.

"Because it was nobody's business; because nobody wished to incur the vengeance of his comrades; because there were not sufficient gendarmes near to insure security against the number of desperadoes he might have at hand; because the gendarmes might not have received particular instructions with respect to him, and might not feel disposed to engage in a hazardous conflict without compulsion. In short, I might give you a thousand reasons rising out of the state of our government and manners, not one of which after all might appear satisfactory."

The Englishman shrugged his shoulders with an air of contempt.

"I have been told," added the Roman, rather quickly, "that even in your metropolis of London, notorious thieves, well known to the police as such, walk the streets at noonday in search of their prey, and are not molested unless caught in the very act of robbery."

The Englishman gave another shrug, but with a different expression.

"Well, sir, I fixed my eye on this daring wolf, thus prowling through the fold, and saw him enter a church. I was curious to witness his devotion. You know our spacious, magnificent churches. The one in which he entered was vast, and shrouded in the dusk of evening. At the extremity of the long aisles a couple of tapers feebly glimmered on the grand altar. In one of the side chapels was a votive candle placed before the image of a saint. Before this image the robber had prostrated himself. His mantle partly falling off from his shoulders as he knelt, revealed a form of Herculean strength; a stiletto and pistol glittered in his belt; and the light falling on his countenance, showed features not unhandsome, but strongly and fiercely characterised. As he prayed, he became vehemently agitated; his lips quivered; sighs and murmurs, almost groans, burst from him; he beat his breast with violence; then clasped his hands and wrung them convulsively, as he extended them towards the image. Never had I seen such a terrific picture of remorse. I felt fearful of being discovered watching him, and withdrew. Shortly afterwards, I saw him issue from the church wrapped in his mantle. He re-crossed the square, and no doubt returned to the mountains with a disburdened conscience, ready to incur a fresh arrear of crime."

Here the Neapolitan was about to get hold of the conversation, and had just preluded with the ominous remark, "That puts me in mind of a circumstance," when the improvisatore, too adroit to suffer himself to be again superseded, went on, pretending not to hear the interruption.

"Among the many circumstances connected with the banditti, which serve to render the traveller uneasy and insecure, is the understanding which they sometimes have with innkeepers. Many an isolated inn among the lonely parts of the Roman territories, and especially about the mountains, are of a dangerous and perfidious character. They are places where the banditti gather information, and where the unwary traveller, remote from hearing or assistance, is betrayed to the midnight dagger. The robberies committed at such inns are often accompanied by the most atrocious murders; for it is only by the complete extermination of their victims that the assassins can escape detection. I recollect an adventure," added he, "which occurred at one of these solitary mountain inns, which, as you all seem in a mood for robber anecdotes, may not be uninteresting."

Having secured the attention and awakened the curiosity of the by-standers, he paused for a moment, rolled up his large eyes as improvisatori are apt to do when they would recollect an impromptu, and then related with great dramatic effect the following story, which had, doubtless, been well prepared and digested beforehand.

THE BELATED TRAVELLERS.

It was late one evening that a carriage, drawn by mules, slowly toiled its way up one of the passes of the Apennines. It was through one of the wildest defiles, where a hamlet occurred only at distant intervals, perched on the summit of some rocky height, or the white towers of a convent peeped out from among the thick mountain foliage. The carriage was of ancient and ponderous construction. Its faded embellishments spoke of former splendour, but its crazy springs and axle-trees creaked out the tale of present decline. Within was seated a tall, thin old gentleman, in a kind of military travelling dress, and a foraging cap trimmed with fur, though the grey locks which stole from under it hinted that his fighting days were over. Beside him was a pale, beautiful girl of eighteen, dressed in something of a northern or Polish costume. One servant was seated in front, a rusty, crusty-looking fellow, with a scar across his face, an orange-tawny *schnur-bart*, or pair of mustaches, bristling from under his nose, and altogether the air of an old soldier.

It was, in fact, the equipage of a Polish nobleman; a wreck of one of those princely families once of almost oriental magnificence, but broken down and impoverished by the disasters of Poland. The Count, like many other generous spirits, had been found guilty of the crime of patriotism, and was, in a manner, an exile from his country. He had resided for some time in the first cities of Italy, for the education of his daughter, in whom all his cares and pleasures were now centred. He had taken her into society, where her beauty and her accomplishments gained her many admirers; and had she not been the daughter of a poor broken-down Polish nobleman, it is more than probable many would have contended for her hand. Suddenly, however, her health became delicate and drooping; her gaiety fled with the roses of her cheek, and she sank into silence and debility. The old Count saw the change with the solicitude of a parent. "We must try a change of air and scene," said he; and in a few days the old family carriage was rumbling among the Apennines.

Their only attendant was the veteran Caspar, who had been born in the family, and grown rusty in its service. He had followed his master in all his fortunes; had fought by his side; had stood over him when fallen in battle; and had received, in his defence, the sabre-cut which added such grimness to his countenance. He was now his valet, his steward, his butler, his factotum. The only being that rivalled his master in his affections

was his youthful mistress. She had grown up under his eye, he had led her by the hand when she was a child, and he now looked upon her with the fondness of a parent. Nay, he even took the freedom of a parent in giving his blunt opinion on all matters which he thought were for her good; and felt a parent's vanity at seeing her gazed at and admired.

The evening was thickening; they had been for some time passing through narrow gorges of the mountains, along the edges of a tumbling stream. The scenery was lonely and savage. The rocks often beetled over the road, with flocks of white goats browsing on their brinks, and gazing down upon the travellers. They had between two and three leagues yet to go before they could reach any village; yet the muleteer, Pietro, a tippling old fellow, who had refreshed himself at the last halting-place with a more than ordinary quantity of wine, sat singing and talking alternately to his mules, and suffering them to lag on at a snail's pace, in spite of the frequent entreaties of the Count and maledictions of Caspar.

The clouds began to roll in heavy masses among the mountains, shrouding their summits from view. The air was damp and chilly. The Count's solicitude on his daughter's account overcame his usual patience. He leaned from the carriage, and called to old Pietro in an angry tone:

"Forward!" said he. "It will be midnight before we arrive at our inn."

"Yonder it is, Signor," said the muleteer.

"Where?" demanded the Count.

"Yonder," said Pietro, pointing to a desolate pile about a quarter of a league distant.

"That the place?—why, it looks more like a ruin than an inn. I thought we were to put up for the night at a comfortable village."

Here Pietro uttered a string of piteous exclamations and ejaculations, such as are ever at the tip of the tongue of a delinquent muleteer. "Such road! and such mountains! and then his poor animals were wayworn, and leg-weary; they would fall lame; they would never be able to reach the village. And then what could his Excellenza wish for better than the inn; a perfect castello—a palazza—and such people!—and such a larder!—and such beds!—His Excellenza might fare as sumptuously, and sleep as soundly there as a prince!"

The Count was easily persuaded, for he was anxious to get his daughter out of the night air; so in a little while the old carriage rattled and jingled into the great gateway of the inn.

The building did certainly in some measure answer to the muleteer's description. It was large enough for either castle or palace; built in a strong, but simple and almost rude style; with a great quantity of waste room. It had in fact been, in former times, a hunting-seat of one of the Italian princes. There was space enough within its walls and out-buildings to have accom-

modated a little army. A scanty household seemed now to people this dreary mansion. The faces that presented themselves on the arrival of the travellers were begrimed with dirt, and scowling in their expression. They all knew old Pietro, however, and gave him a welcome as he entered, singing and talking, and almost whooping, into the gateway.

The hostess of the inn waited herself on the Count and his daughter, to show them the apartments. They were conducted through a long gloomy corridor, and then through a suite of chambers opening into each other, with lofty ceilings, and great beams extending across them. Every thing, however, had a wretched squalid look. The walls were damp and bare, excepting that here and there hung some great painting, large enough for a chapel, and blackened out of all distinction.

They chose two bedrooms, one within another; the inner one for the daughter. The bedsteads were massive and misshapen; but on examining the beds so vaunted by old Pietro, they found them stuffed with fibres of hemp knotted in great lumps. The Count shrugged his shoulders, but there was no choice left.

The chilliness of the apartments crept to their bones; and they were glad to return to a common chamber, or kind of hall, where was a fire burning in a huge cavern, miscalled a chimney. A quantity of green wood, just thrown on, puffed out volumes of smoke. The room corresponded to the rest of the mansion. The floor was paved and dirty. A great oaken table stood in the centre, immovable from its size and weight.

The only thing that contradicted this prevalent air of indigence was the dress of the hostess. She was a slattern of course; yet her garments, though dirty and negligent, were of costly materials. She wore several rings of great value on her fingers, and jewels in her ears, and round her neck was a string of large pearls, to which was attached a sparkling crucifix. She had the remains of beauty, yet there was something in the expression of her countenance that inspired the young lady with singular aversion. She was officious and obsequious in her attentions, and both the Count and his daughter felt relieved, when she consigned them to the care of a dark, sullen-looking servant-maid, and went off to superintend the supper.

Caspar was indignant at the muleteer for having, either through negligence or design, subjected his master and mistress to such quarters; and vowed by his mustaches to have revenge on the old varlet the moment they were safe out from among the mountains. He kept up a continual quarrel with the sulky servant-maid, which only served to increase the sinister expression with which she regarded the travellers from under her strong dark eyebrows.

As to the Count, he was a good-humoured passive traveller. Perhaps real misfortunes had subdued his spirit, and rendered him

tolerant of many of those petty evils which make prosperous men miserable. He drew a large broken arm-chair to the fireside for his daughter, and another for himself, and seizing an enormous pair of tongs, endeavoured to re-arrange the wood so as to produce a blaze. His efforts, however, were only repaid by thicker puffs of smoke, which almost overcame the good gentleman's patience. He would draw back, cast a look upon his delicate daughter, then upon the cheerless, squalid apartment, and shrugging his shoulders, would give a fresh stir to the fire.

Of all the miseries of a comfortless inn, however, there is none greater than sulky attendance: the good Count for some time bore the smoke in silence, rather than address himself to the scowling servant-maid. At length he was compelled to beg for drier firewood. The woman retired muttering. On re-entering the room hastily, with an armful of fagots, her foot slipped; she fell, and striking her head against the corner of a chair, cut her temple severely.

The blow stunned her for a time, and the wound bled profusely. When she recovered, she found the Count's daughter administering to her wound, and binding it up with her own handkerchief. It was such an attention as any woman of ordinary feeling would have yielded; but perhaps there was something in the appearance of the lovely being who bent over her, or in the tones of her voice, that touched the heart of the woman, unused to be ministered to by such hands. Certain it is, she was strongly affected. She caught the delicate hand of the Polonaise, and pressed it fervently to her lips:

"May San Francesco watch over you, Signora!" exclaimed she.

A new arrival broke the stillness of the inn. It was a Spanish Princess with a numerous retinue. The courtyard was in an uproar; the house in a bustle. The landlady hurried to attend such distinguished guests: and the poor Count and his daughter, and their supper, were for a moment forgotten. The veteran Caspar muttered Polish maledictions enough to agonize an Italian ear; but it was impossible to convince the hostess of the superiority of his old master and young mistress to the whole nobility of Spain.

The noise of the arrival had attracted the daughter to the window just as the new-comers had alighted. A young cavalier sprang out of the carriage, and handed out the Princess. The latter was a little shrivelled old lady, with a face of parchment and sparkling black eye; she was rich and gaily dressed, and walked with the assistance of a golden-headed cane as high as herself. The young man was tall and elegantly formed. The Count's daughter shrunk back at sight of him, though the deep frame of the window screened her from observation. She gave a heavy sigh as she closed the casement. What that sigh meant I cannot say. Perhaps it was at the contrast between the splendid equipage of the Princess, and the crazy rheumatic-looking old vehicle of her father, which

stood hard by. Whatever might be the reason, the young lady closed the casement with a sigh. She returned to her chair,—a slight shivering passed over her delicate frame: she leaned her elbow on the arm of the chair, rested her pale cheek in the palm of her hand, and looked mournfully into the fire.

The Count thought she looked paler than usual.

"Does anything ail thee, my child?" said he.

"Nothing, dear father!" replied she, laying her hand within his, and looking up smiling in his face; but as she said so, a treacherous tear rose suddenly to her eye, and she turned away her head.

"The air of the window has chilled thee," said the Count fondly, "but a good night's rest will make all well again."

The supper table was at length laid, and the supper about to be served, when the hostess appeared, with her usual obsequiousness, apologizing for showing in the new-comers; but the night air was cold, and there was no other chamber in the inn with a fire in it. She had scarcely made the apology when the Princess entered, leaning on the arm of the elegant young man.

The Count immediately recognised her for a lady whom he had met frequently in society, both at Rome and Naples; and at whose conversaziones, in fact, he had constantly been invited. The cavalier, too, was her nephew and heir, who had been greatly admired in the gay circles both for his merits and prospects, and who had once been on a visit at the same time with his daughter and himself at the villa of a nobleman near Naples. Report had recently affianced him to a rich Spanish heiress.

The meeting was agreeable to both the Count and the Princess. The former was a gentleman of the old school, courteous in the extreme; the Princess had been a belle in her youth, and a woman of fashion all her life, and liked to be attended to.

The young man approached the daughter, and began something of a complimentary observation; but his manner was embarrassed, and his compliment ended in an indistinct murmur; while the daughter bowed without looking up, moved her lips without articulating a word, and sank again into her chair, where she sat gazing into the fire, with a thousand varying expressions passing over her countenance.

This singular greeting of the young people was not perceived by the old ones, who where occupied at the time with their own courteous salutations. It was arranged that they should sup together; and as the Princess travelled with her own cook, a very tolerable supper soon smoked upon the board. This, too, was assisted by choice wines, and liquors, and delicate confitures, brought from one of her carriages; for she was a veteran epicure, and curious in her relish for the good things of this world. She was, in fact, a vivacious little old lady, who mingled the woman of dissipation with the devotee. She was actually on her way to Loretto to expiate a long life of gallantries and peccadilloes by a

rich offering at the holy shrine. She was, to be sure, rather a luxurious penitent, and a contrast to the primitive pilgrims, with scrip and staff, and cockle-shell; but then it would be unreasonable to expect such self-denial from people of fashion; and there was not a doubt of the ample efficacy of the rich crucifixes, and golden vessels, and jewelled ornaments, which she was bearing to the treasury of the blessed Virgin.

The Princess and the Count chatted much during supper about the scenes and society in which they had mingled, and did not notice that they had all the conversation to themselves: the young people were silent and constrained. The daughter ate nothing, in spite of the politeness of the Princess, who continually pressed her to taste one or other of the delicacies. The Count shook his head.

"She is not well this evening," said he. "I thought she would have fainted just now as she was looking out of the window at your carriage on its arrival."

A crimson glow flushed to the very temples of the daughter; but she leaned over her plate, and her tresses cast a shade over her countenance.

When supper was over, they drew their chairs about the great fireplace. The flame and smoke had subsided, and a heap of glowing embers diffused a grateful warmth. A guitar, which had been brought from the Count's carriage, leaned against the wall; the Princess perceived it: "Can we not have a little music before parting for the night?" demanded she.

The Count was proud of his daughter's accomplishment, and joined in the request. The young man made an effort of politeness, and taking up the guitar, presented it, though in an embarrassed manner, to the fair musician. She would have declined it, but was too much confused to do so; indeed, she was so nervous and agitated, that she dared not trust her voice to make an excuse. She touched the instrument with a faltering hand, and, after preluding a little, accompanied herself in several Polish airs. Her father's eyes glistened as he sat gazing on her. Even the crusty Caspar lingered in the room, partly through a fondness for the music of his native country, but chiefly through his pride in the musician. Indeed, the melody of the voice, and the delicacy of the touch, were enough to have charmed more fastidious ears. The little Princess nodded her head and tapped her hand to the music, though exceedingly out of time; while the nephew sat buried in profound contemplation of a black picture on the opposite wall.

"And now," said the Count, patting her cheek fondly, "one more favour. Let the Princess hear that little Spanish air you were so fond of. You can't think," added he, "what a proficiency she has made in your language; though she has been a sad girl, and neglected it of late."

The colour flushed the pale cheek of the daughter. She hesitated, murmured something; but with sudden effort collected her-

self, struck the guitar boldly, and began. It was a Spanish romance, with something of love and melancholy in it. She gave the first stanza with great expression, for the tremulous, melting tones of her voice went to the heart; but her articulation failed, her lip quivered, the song died away, and she burst into tears.

The Count folded her tenderly in his arms. "Thou art not well, my child," said he, "and I am tasking thee cruelly. Retire to thy chamber, and God bless thee!" She bowed to the company without raising her eyes, and glided out of the room.

The Count shook his head as the door closed. "Something is the matter with that child," said he, "which I cannot divine. She has lost all health and spirits lately. She was always a tender flower, and I had much pains to rear her. Excuse a father's foolishness," continued he, "but I have seen much trouble in my family; and this poor girl is all that is now left to me; and she used to be so lively——"

"Maybe she's in love!" said the little Princess, with a shrewd nod of the head.

"Impossible!" replied the good Count artlessly. "She has never mentioned a word of such a thing to me."

How little did the worthy gentleman dream of the thousand cares, and griefs, and mighty love concerns which agitate a virgin heart, and which a timid girl scarcely breathes unto herself.

The nephew of the Princess rose abruptly, and walked about the room.

When she found herself alone in her chamber, the feelings of the young lady, so long restrained, broke forth with violence. She opened the casement, that the cool air might blow upon her throbbing temples. Perhaps there was some little pride or pique mingled with her emotions; though her gentle nature did not seem calculated to harbour any such angry inmate.

"He saw me weep!" said she, with a sudden mantling of the cheek, and a swelling of the throat,—"but no matter!—no matter!"

And so saying, she threw her white arms across the window-frame, buried her face in them, and abandoned herself to an agony of tears. She remained lost in a reverie, until the sound of her father's and Caspar's voices in the adjoining room gave token that the party had retired for the night. The lights gleaming from window to window, showed that they were conducting the Princess to her apartments, which were in the opposite wing of the inn; and she distinctly saw the figure of the nephew as he passed one of the casements.

She heaved a deep heart-drawn sigh, and was about to close the lattice, when her attention was caught by words spoken below her window, by two persons who had just turned an angle of the building.

"But what will become of the poor young lady?" said a voice which she recognised for that of the servant-woman.

"Pooh! she must take her chance," was the reply from old Pietro.

"But cannot she be spared?" asked the other entreatingly; "she's so kind-hearted!"

"Cospetto! what has got into thee?" replied the other petulantly: "would you mar the whole business for the sake of a silly girl?" By this time they had got so far from the window that the Polonaise could hear nothing further.

There was something in this fragment of conversation calculated to alarm. Did it relate to herself?—and if so, what was this impending danger from which it was entreated that she might be spared? She was several times on the point of tapping at her father's door, to tell him what she had heard; but she might have been mistaken; she might have heard indistinctly; the conversation might have alluded to some one else; at any rate, it was too indefinite to lead to any conclusion. While in this state of irresolution, she was startled by a low knocking against the wainscot in a remote part of her gloomy chamber. On holding up the light, she beheld a small door there, which she had not before remarked. It was bolted on the inside. She advanced, and demanded who knocked, and was answered in the voice of the female domestic. On opening the door, the woman stood before it pale and agitated. She entered softly, laying her finger on her lips in sign of caution and secrecy.

"Fly!" said she: "leave this house instantly, or you are lost!"

The young lady, trembling with alarm, demanded an explanation.

"I have no time," replied the woman, "I dare not—I shall be missed if I linger here—but fly instantly, or you are lost."

"And leave my father?"

"Where is he?"

"In the adjoining chamber."

"Call him, then, but lose no time."

The young lady knocked at her father's door. He was not yet retired to bed. She hurried into his room, and told him of the fearful warnings she had received. The Count returned with her into her chamber, followed by Caspar. His questions soon drew the truth out of the embarrassed answers of the woman. The inn was beset by robbers. They were to be introduced after midnight, when the attendants of the Princess and the rest of the travellers were sleeping, and would be an easy prey.

"But we can barricade the inn, we can defend ourselves," said the Count.

"What! when the people of the inn are in league with the banditti?"

"How then are we to escape? Can we not order out the carriage and depart?"

"San Francesco! for what? To give the alarm that the plot is discovered? That would make the robbers desperate, and bring

them on you at once. They have had notice of the rich booty in the inn, and will not easily let it escape them."

"But how else are we to get off?"

"There is a horse behind the inn," said the woman, "from which the man has just dismounted, who has been to summon the aid of part of the band at a distance.

"One horse; and there are three of us!" said the Count.

"And the Spanish princess!" cried the daughter anxiously—"How can she be extricated from the danger?"

"Diavolo! what is she to me?" said the woman, in sudden passion. "It is *you* I come to save, and you will betray me, and we shall all be lost! Hark!" continued she, "I am called—I shall be discovered—one word more. This door leads by a staircase to the courtyard. Under the shed, in the rear of the yard, is a small door leading out to the fields. You will find a horse there; mount it; make a circuit under the shadow of a ridge of rocks that you will see; proceed cautiously and quietly until you cross a brook, and find yourself on the road just where there are three white crosses nailed against a tree; then put your horse to his speed, and make the best of your way to the village—but recollect, my life is in your hands—say nothing of what you have heard or seen, whatever may happen at this inn."

The woman hurried away. A short and agitated consultation took place between the Count, his daughter, and the veteran Caspar. The young lady seemed to have lost all apprehension for herself, in her solicitude for the safety of the Princess. "To fly in selfish silence, and leave her to be massacred!"—A shuddering seized her at the very thought. The gallantry of the Count, too, revolted at the idea. He could not consent to turn his back upon a party of helpless travellers, and leave them in ignorance of the danger which hung over them.

"But what is to become of the young lady?" said Caspar, "if the alarm is given, and the inn thrown in a tumult? What may happen to her in a chance-medley affray?"

Here the feelings of the father were roused; he looked upon his lovely, helpless child, and trembled at the chance of her falling into the hands of ruffians.

The daughter, however, thought nothing of herself. "The Princess! the Princess!—only let the Princess know her danger." She was willing to share it with her.

At length Caspar interfered with the zeal of a faithful old servant. No time was to be lost—the first thing was to get the young lady out of danger. "Mount the horse," said he to the Count, "take her behind you, and fly! Make for the village, rouse the inhabitants, and send assistance. Leave me here to give the alarm to the Princess and her people. I am an old soldier, and I think we shall be able to stand siege until you send us aid."

The daughter would again have insisted on staying with the Princess—

"For what?" said old Caspar, bluntly. "You could do no good—you would be in the way;—we should have to take care of you instead of ourselves."

There was no answering these objections; the Count seized his pistols, and taking his daughter under his arm, moved towards the staircase. The young lady paused, stepped back, and said, faltering with agitation—"There's a young cavalier with the Princess—her nephew—perhaps he may—"

"I understand you, Mademoiselle," replied old Caspar, with a significant nod; "not a hair of his head shall suffer harm, if I can help it!"

The young lady blushed deeper than ever; she had not anticipated being so thoroughly understood by the blunt old servant.

"That is not what I mean," said she, hesitating. She would have added something, or made some explanation, but the moments were precious, and her father hurried her away.

They found their way through the courtyard to the small postern gate where the horse stood, fastened to a ring in the wall. The Count mounted, took his daughter behind him, and they proceeded as quietly as possible in the direction which the woman had pointed out. Many a fearful and anxious look did the daughter cast back upon the gloomy pile; the lights which had feebly twinkled through the dusky casements were one by one disappearing, a sign that the inmates were gradually sinking to repose; and she trembled with impatience, lest succour should not arrive until that repose had been fatally interrupted.

They passed silently and safely along the skirts of the rocks, protected from observation by their overhanging shadows. They crossed the brook, and reached the place where three white crosses nailed against a tree told of some murder that had been committed there. Just as they had reached this ill-omened spot, they beheld several men in the gloom coming down a craggy defile among the rocks.

"Who goes there?" exclaimed a voice. The Count put spurs to his horse, but one of the men sprang forward and seized the bridle. The horse started back, and reared, and had not the young lady clung to her father, she would have been thrown off. The Count leaned forward, put a pistol to the very head of the ruffian, and fired. The latter fell dead. The horse sprang forward. Two or three shots were fired, which whistled by the fugitives, but only served to augment their speed. They reached the village in safety.

The whole place was soon roused; but such was the awe in which the banditti were held, that the inhabitants shrunk at the idea of encountering them. A desperate band had for some time infested that pass through the mountains, and the inn had long been suspected of being one of those horrible places where the

unsuspicious wayfarer is entrapped and silently disposed of. The rich ornaments worn by the slattern hostess of the inn had excited heavy suspicions. Several instances had occurred of small parties of travellers disappearing mysteriously on that road, who, it was supposed at first, had been carried off by the robbers for the purpose of ransom, but who had never been heard of more. Such were the tales buzzed in the ears of the Count by the villagers, as he endeavoured to arouse them to the rescue of the Princess and her train from their perilous situation. The daughter seconded the exertions of her father with all the eloquence of prayers, and tears, and beauty. Every moment that elapsed increased her anxiety, until it became agonizing. Fortunately there was a body of gendarmes resting at the village. A number of the young villagers volunteered to accompany them, and the little army was put in motion. The Count having deposited his daughter in a place of safety, was too much of the old soldier not to hasten to the scene of danger. It would be difficult to paint the anxious agitation of the young lady while awaiting the result.

The party arrived at the inn just in time. The robbers, finding their plans discovered, and the travellers prepared for their reception, had become open and furious in their attack. The Princess's party had barricaded themselves in one suite of apartments, and repulsed the robbers from the doors and windows. Caspar had shown the generalship of a veteran, and the nephew of the Princess the dashing valour of a young soldier. Their ammunition, however, was nearly exhausted, and they would have found it difficult to hold out much longer, when a discharge from the musketry of the gendarmes gave them the joyful tidings of succour.

A fierce fight ensued, for part of the robbers were surprised in the inn, and had to stand siege in their turn; while their comrades made desperate attempts to relieve them from under cover of the neighbouring rocks and thickets.

I cannot pretend to give a minute account of the fight, as I have heard it related in a variety of ways. Suffice it to say, the robbers were defeated; several of them killed, and several taken prisoners; which last, together with the people of the inn, were either executed or sent to the galleys.

I picked up these particulars in the course of a journey which I made some time after the event had taken place. I passed by the very inn. It was then dismantled, excepting one wing, in which a body of gendarmes was stationed. They pointed out to me the shot-holes in the window-frames, the walls, and the panels of the doors. There were a number of withered limbs dangling from the branches of a neighbouring tree, and blackening in the air, which I was told were the limbs of the robbers who had been slain, and the culprits who had been executed. The whole place had a dismal, wild, forlorn look.

"Were any of the Princess's party killed?" inquired the Englishman.

"As far as I can recollect, there were two or three."

"Not the nephew, I trust?" said the fair Venetian.

"Oh no: he hastened with the Count to relieve the anxiety of the daughter by the assurances of victory. The young lady had been sustained throughout the interval of suspense by the very intensity of her feelings. The moment she saw her father returning in safety, accompanied by the nephew of the Princess, she uttered a cry of rapture, and fainted. Happily, however, she soon recovered, and what is more, was married shortly afterwards to the young cavalier, and the whole party accompanied the old Princess in her Pilgrimage to Loretto, where her votive offerings may still be seen in the treasury of the Santa Casa."

It would be tedious to follow the devious course of the conversation, as it wound through a maze of stories of the kind, until it was taken up by two other travellers who had come under convoy of the procaccio: Mr. Hobbs and Mr. Dobbs, a linendraper and a greengrocer, just returning from a hasty tour in Greece and the Holy Land. They were full of the story of Alderman Popkins. They were astonished that the robbers should dare to molest a man of his importance on 'Change, he being an eminent dry-salter of Throgmorton-street, and a magistrate to boot.

In fact, the story of the Popkins family was but too true. It was attested by too many present to be for a moment doubted; and from the contradictory and concordant testimony of half a score, all eager to relate it, and all talking at the same time, the Englishman was enabled to gather the following particulars.

THE ADVENTURE OF THE POPKINS FAMILY.

It was but a few days before, that the carriage of Alderman Popkins had driven up to the inn of Terracina. Those who have seen an English family-carriage on the continent must have remarked the sensation it produces. It is an epitome of England; a little morsel of the old island rolling about the world. Every thing about it compact, snug, finished, and fitting. The wheels turning on patent axles without rattling; the body, hanging so well on its springs, yielding to every motion, yet protecting from every shock; the ruddy faces gaping from the windows—sometimes of a portly old citizen, sometimes of a voluminous dowager, and sometimes of a fine fresh hoyden just from boarding-school. And then the dickeys loaded with well-dressed servants, beef-fed and bluff; looking down from their heights with contempt on all the world around; profoundly ignorant of the country and the people, and devoutly certain that everything not English must be wrong.

Such was the carriage of Alderman Popkins as it made its appearance at Terracina. The courier, who had preceded it to order horses, and who was a Neapolitan, had given a magnificent account

of the richness and greatness of his master; blundering, with an Italian's splendour of imagination, about the Alderman's titles and dignities. The host had added his usual share of exaggeration; so that by the time the Alderman drove up to the door, he was a Milor—Magnifico—Principe—the Lord knows what!

The Alderman was advised to take an escort to Fondi and Itri, but he refused. It was as much as a man's life was worth, he said, to stop him on the king's highway: he would complain of it to the ambassador at Naples; he would make a national affair of it. The Principessa Popkins, a fresh, motherly dame, seemed perfectly secure in the protection of her husband, so omnipotent a man in the city. The Signorines Popkins, two fine bouncing girls, looked to their brother Tom, who had taken lessons in boxing; and as to the dandy himself, he swore no scaramouch of an Italian robber would dare to meddle with an Englishman. The landlord shrugged his shoulders, and turned out the palms of his hands with a true Italian grimace, and the carriage of Milor Popkins rolled on.

They passed through several very suspicious places without any molestation. The Misses Popkins, who were very romantic, and had learnt to draw in water-colours, were enchanted with the savage scenery around; it was so like what they had read in Mrs. Radcliffe's romances; they should like of all things to make sketches. At length the carriage arrived at a place where the road wound up a long hill. Mrs. Popkins had sunk into a sleep; the young ladies were lost in the "Loves of the Angels;" and the dandy was hectoring the postilions from the coach-box. The Alderman got out, as he said, to stretch his legs up the hill. It was a long, winding ascent, and obliged him every now and then to stop and blow and wipe his forehead, with many a pish! and hew! being rather pursy and short of wind. As the carriage, however, was far behind him, and moved slowly under the weight of so many well-stuffed trunks and well-stuffed travellers, he had plenty of time to walk at leisure.

On a jutting point of a rock that overhung the road, nearly at the summit of the hill, just where the road began again to descend, he saw a solitary man seated, who appeared to be tending goats. Alderman Popkins was one of your shrewd travellers who always liked to be picking up small information along the road; so he thought he'd just scramble up to the honest man, and have a little talk with him by way of learning the news and getting a lesson in Italian. As he drew near to the peasant, he did not half like his looks. He was partly reclining on the rocks, wrapped in the usual long mantle, which, with his slouched hat, only left a part of a swarthy visage, with a keen black eye, a beetle brow, and a fierce mustache to be seen. He had whistled several times to his dog, which was roving about the side of the hill. As the Alderman approached, he arose and greeted him. When standing erect, he

seemed almost gigantic, at least in the eyes of Alderman Popkins, who, however, being a short man, might be deceived.

The latter would gladly now have been back in the carriage, or even on 'Change in London; for he was by no means well pleased with his company. However, he determined to put the best face on matters, and was beginning a conversation about the state of the weather, the baddishness of the crops, and the price of goats in that part of the country, when he heard a violent screaming. He ran to the edge of the rock, and looking over, beheld his carriage surrounded by robbers. One held down the fat footman, another had the dandy by his starched cravat, with a pistol to his head; one was rummaging a portmanteau, another rummaging the Principessa's pockets; while the two Misses Popkins were screaming from each window of the carriage, and their waiting-maid squalling from the dickey.

Alderman Popkins felt all the ire of the parent and the magistrate roused within him. He grasped his cane, and was on the point of scrambling down the rocks either to assault the robbers or to read the riot act, when he was suddenly seized by the arm. It was by his friend the goatherd, whose cloak falling open, discovered a belt stuck full of pistols and stilettos. In short, he found himself in the clutches of the captain of the band, who had stationed himself on the rock to look out for travellers and to give notice to his men.

A sad ransacking took place. Trunks were turned inside out, and all the finery and frippery of the Popkins family scattered about the road. Such a chaos of Venice beads and Roman mosaics, and Paris bonnets of the young ladies, mingled with the Alderman's nightcaps and lambs'-wool stockings, and the dandy's hair-brushes, stays, and starched cravats.

The gentlemen were eased of their purses and their watches, the ladies of their jewels; and the whole party were on the point of being carried up into the mountain, when fortunately the appearance of soldiers at a distance obliged the robbers to make off with the spoils they had secured, and leave the Popkins family to gather together the remnants of their effects, and make the best of their way to Fondi.

When safe arrived, the Alderman made a terrible blustering at the inn; threatened to complain to the ambassador at Naples, and was ready to shake his cane at the whole country. The dandy had many stories to tell of his scuffles with the brigands, who overpowered him merely by numbers. As to the Misses Popkins, they were quite delighted with the adventure, and were occupied the whole evening in writing it in their journals. They declared the captain of the band to be a most romantic-looking man, they dared to say some unfortunate lover or exiled nobleman; and several of the band to be very handsome young men—"quite picturesque!"

"In verity," said mine host of Terracina, "they say the captain of the band is *un gallant uomo*."

"A gallant man!" said the Englishman, indignantly: "I'd have your gallant man hanged like a dog!"

"To dare to meddle with Englishmen!" said Mr. Hobbs.

"And such a family as the Popkinses!" said Mr. Dobbs.

"They ought to come upon the county for damages!" said Mr. Hobbs.

"Our ambassador should make a complaint to the government of Naples," said Mr. Dobbs.

"They should be obliged to drive these rascals out of the country," said Hobbs.

"And if they did not, we should declare war against them," said Dobbs.

"Pish!—humbug!" muttered the Englishman to himself, and walked away.

The Englishman had been a little wearied by this story, and by the ultra zeal of his countrymen, and was glad when a summons to their supper relieved him from the crowd of travellers. He walked out with his Venetian friends and a young Frenchman of an interesting demeanour, who had become sociable with them in the course of the conversation. They directed their steps towards the sea, which was lit up by the rising moon.

As they strolled along the beach they came to where a party of soldiers were stationed in a circle. They were guarding a number of galley slaves, who were permitted to refresh themselves in the evening breeze, and sport and roll upon the sand.

The Frenchman paused, and pointed to the group of wretches at their sports. "It is difficult," said he, "to conceive a more frightful mass of crime than is here collected. Many of these have probably been robbers, such as you have heard described. Such is, too often, the career of crime in this country. The parricide, the fratricide, the infanticide, the miscreant of every kind, first flies from justice and turns mountain bandit; and then, when wearied of a life of danger, becomes traitor to his brother desperadoes; betrays them to punishment, and thus buys a commutation of his own sentence from death to the galleys; happy in the privilege of wallowing on the shore an hour a day, in this mere state of animal enjoyment."

The fair Venetian shuddered as she cast a look at the horde of wretches at their evening amusement. "They seemed," she said, "like so many serpents writhing together." And yet the idea that some of them had been robbers, those formidable beings that haunted her imagination, made her still cast another fearful glance, as we contemplate some terrible beast of prey, with a degree of awe and horror, even though caged and chained.

The conversation reverted to the tales of banditti which they had heard at the inn. The Englishman condemned some of them

as fabrications, others as exaggerations. As to the story of the improvisatore, he pronounced it a mere piece of romance, originating in the heated brain of the narrator.

"And yet," said the Frenchman, "there is so much romance about the real life of those beings, and about the singular country they infest, that it is hard to tell what to reject on the ground of improbability. I have had an adventure happen to myself which gave me an opportunity of getting some insight into their manners and habits, which I found altogether out of the common run of existence."

There was an air of mingled frankness and modesty about the Frenchman which had gained the good will of the whole party, not even excepting the Englishman. They all eagerly inquired after the particulars of the circumstances he alluded to, and as they strolled slowly up and down the sea-shore, he related the following adventure.

THE PAINTER'S ADVENTURE.

I AM an historical painter by profession, and resided for some time in the family of a foreign Prince at his villa, about fifteen miles from Rome, among some of the most interesting scenery of Italy. It is situated on the heights of ancient Tusculum. In its neighbourhood are the ruins of the villas of Cicero, Scylla, Lucullus, Rufinus, and other illustrious Romans, who sought refuge here occasionally from their toils, in the bosom of a soft and luxurious repose. From the midst of delightful bowers, refreshed by the pure mountain breeze, the eye looks over a romantic landscape full of poetical and historical associations. The Albanian mountains; Tivoli, once the favourite residence of Horace and Mecænas; the vast, deserted, melancholy Campagna, with the Tiber winding through it, and St. Peter's dome swelling in the midst, the monument, as it were, over the grave of ancient Rome.

I assisted the Prince in researches which he was making among the classic ruins of his vicinity: his exertions were highly successful. Many wrecks of admirable statues and fragments of exquisite sculpture were dug up; monuments of the taste and magnificence that reigned in the ancient Tusculan abodes. He had studded his villa and its grounds with statues, relievos, vases, and sarcophagi, thus retrieved from the bosom of the earth.

The mode of life pursued at the villa was delightfully serene, diversified by interesting occupations and elegant leisure. Every one passed the day according to his pleasure or pursuits; and we all assembled in a cheerful dinner party at sunset.

It was on the fourth of November, a beautiful serene day, that we had assembled in the saloon at the sound of the first dinner-bell. The family were surprised at the absence of the Prince's confessor. They waited for him in vain, and at length placed themselves at table. They at first attributed his absence to his having

prolonged his customary walk; and the early part of the dinner passed without any uneasiness. When the dessert was served, however, without his making his appearance, they began to feel anxious. They feared he might have been taken ill in some alley of the woods, or might have fallen into the hands of robbers. Not far from the villa, with the interval of a small valley, rose the mountains of the Abruzzi, the stronghold of banditti. Indeed, the neighbourhood had for some time past been infested by them: and Barbone, a notorious bandit chief, had often been met prowling about the solitudes of Tusculum. The daring enterprises of these ruffians were well known: the objects of their cupidity or vengeance were insecure even in palaces. As yet they had respected the possessions of the Prince; but the idea of such dangerous spirits hovering about the neighbourhood was sufficient to occasion alarm.

The fears of the company increased as evening closed in. The Prince ordered out forest guards and domestics with flambeaux to search for the confessor. They had not departed long when a slight noise was heard in the corridor of the ground floor. The family were dining on the first floor, and the remaining domestics were occupied in attendance. There was no one on the ground-floor at this moment but the housekeeper, the laundress, and three field labourers, who were resting themselves, and conversing with the women.

I heard the noise from below, and presuming it to be occasioned by the return of the absentee, I left the table and hastened down stairs, eager to gain intelligence that might relieve the anxiety of the Prince and Princess. I had scarcely reached the last step, when I beheld before me a man dressed as a bandit; a carbine in his hand, and a stiletto and pistols in his belt. His countenance had a mingled expression of ferocity and trepidation: he sprang upon me, and exclaimed exultingly, "Ecco il principe."

I saw at once into what hands I had fallen, but endeavoured to summon up coolness and presence of mind. A glance towards the lower end of the corridor showed me several ruffians, clothed and armed in the same manner with the one who had seized me. They were guarding the two females and the field labourers. The robber, who held me firmly by the collar, demanded repeatedly whether or not I were the Prince: his object evidently was to carry off the Prince, and extort an immense ransom. He was enraged at receiving none but vague replies, for I felt the importance of misleading him.

A sudden thought struck me how I might extricate myself from his clutches. I was unarmed, it is true, but I was vigorous. His companions were at a distance. By a sudden exertion I might wrest myself from him, and spring up the staircase, whither he would not dare to follow me singly. The idea was put in practice as soon as conceived. The ruffian's throat was bare; with my right hand I seized him by it, with my left hand I grasped the

arm which held the carbine. The suddenness of my attack took him completely unawares, and the strangling nature of my grasp paralysed him. He choked and faltered. I felt his hand relaxing its hold, and was on the point of jerking myself away, and darting up the staircase before he could recover himself, when I was suddenly seized by some one from behind.

I had to let go my grasp. The bandit, once released, fell upon me with fury, and gave me several blows with the butt end of his carbine, one of which wounded me severely in the forehead and covered me with blood. He took advantage of my being stunned to rifle me of my watch, and whatever valuables I had about my person.

When I recovered from the effect of the blow, I heard the voice of the chief of the banditti, who exclaimed—"Quello e il principe; siamo contente; andiamo!" (It is the Prince; enough; let us be off.) The band immediately closed round me and dragged me out of the palace, bearing off the three labourers likewise.

I had no hat on, and the blood flowed from my wound; I managed to stanch it, however, with my pocket-handkerchief, which I bound round my forehead. The captain of the band conducted me in triumph, supposing me to be the Prince. We had gone some distance before he learnt his mistake from one of the labourers. His rage was terrible. It was too late to return to the villa and endeavour to retrieve his error, for by this time the alarm must have been given, and every one in arms. He darted at me a ferocious look—swore I had deceived him, and caused him to miss his fortune—and told me to prepare for death. The rest of the robbers were equally furious. I saw their hands upon their poniards, and I knew that death was seldom an empty threat with these ruffians. The labourers saw the peril into which their information had betrayed me, and eagerly assured the captain that I was a man for whom the Prince would pay a great ransom. This produced a pause. For my part, I cannot say that I had been much dismayed by their menaces. I mean not to make any boast of courage; but I have been so schooled to hardship during the late revolutions; and have beheld death around me in so many perilous and disastrous scenes, that I have become in some measure callous to its terrors. The frequent hazard of life makes a man at length as reckless of it as a gambler of his money. To their threat of death, I replied, "that the sooner it was executed the better." This reply seemed to astonish the captain; and the prospect of ransom held out by the labourers had, no doubt, a still greater effect on him. He considered for a moment, assumed a calmer manner, and made a sign to his companions, who had remained waiting for my death-warrant. "Forward!" said he; "we will see about this matter by-and-by!"

We descended rapidly towards the road of La Molara, which leads to Rocca Priori. In the midst of this road is a solitary inn.

The captain ordered the troop to halt at the distance of a pistol-shot from it, and enjoined profound silence. He approached the threshold alone, with noiseless steps. He examined the outside of the door very narrowly, and then returning precipitately, made a sign for the troop to continue its march in silence. It has since been ascertained, that this was one of those infamous inns which are the secret resorts of banditti. The innkeeper had an understanding with the captain as he most probably had with the chiefs of the different bands. When any of the patroles and gens-d'armes were quartered at his house, the brigands were warned of it by a pre-concerted signal on the door; when there was no signal, they might enter with safety, and be sure of welcome.

After pursuing our road a little further, we struck off towards the woody mountains which envelop Rocca Priori. Our march was long and painful; with many circuits and windings: at length we clambered a steep ascent, covered with a thick forest; and when we had reached the centre, I was told to seat myself on the ground. No sooner had I done so than, at a sign from their chief, the robbers surrounded me, and spreading their great cloaks from one to the other, formed a kind of pavilion of mantles, to which their bodies might be said to serve as columns. The captain then struck a light, and a flambeau was lit immediately. The mantles were extended to prevent the light of the flambeau from being seen through the forest. Anxious as was my situation, I could not look round upon this screen of dusky drapery, relieved by the bright colours of the robbers' garments, the gleaming of their weapons, and the variety of strong marked countenances, lit up by the flambeau, without admiring the picturesque effect of the scene. It was quite theatrical.

The captain now held an inkhorn, and giving me pen and paper, ordered me to write what he should dictate. I obeyed. It was a demand, couched in the style of robber eloquence, "that the Prince should send three thousand dollars for my ransom; or that my death should be the consequence of a refusal."

I knew enough of the desperate character of these beings to feel assured this was not an idle menace. Their only mode of insuring attention to their demands is to make the infliction of the penalty inevitable. I saw at once, however, that the demand was preposterous, and made in improper language.

I told the captain so, and assured him that so extravagant a sum would never be granted.—"That I was neither a friend nor relative of the Prince, but a mere artist, employed to execute certain paintings. That I had nothing to offer as a ransom, but the price of my labours; if this were not sufficient, my life was at their disposal; it was a thing on which I set but little value."

I was the more hardy in my reply, because I saw that coolness and hardihood had an effect upon the robbers. It is true, as I finished speaking, the captain laid his hand upon his stiletto; but

he restrained himself, and snatching the letter, folded it, and ordered me in a peremptory tone to address it to the Prince. He then despatched one of the labourers with it to Tusculum, who promised to return with all possible speed.

The robbers now prepared themselves for sleep, and I was told that I might do the same. They spread their great cloaks on the ground, and lay down around me. One was stationed at a little distance to keep watch, and was relieved every two hours. The strangeness and wildness of this mountain bivouac among lawless beings, whose hands seemed ever ready to grasp the stiletto, and with whom life was so trivial and insecure, was enough to banish repose. The coldness of the earth, and of the dew, however, had a still greater effect than mental causes in disturbing my rest. The airs wafted to these mountains from the distant Mediterranean, diffused a great chilliness as the night advanced. An expedient suggested itself. I called one of my fellow-prisoners, the labourers, and made him lie down beside me. Whenever one of my limbs became chilled, I approached it to the robust limb of my neighbour, and borrowed some of his warmth. In this way I was able to obtain a little sleep.

Day at length dawned, and I was roused from my slumber by the voice of the chieftain. He desired me to rise and follow him. I obeyed. On considering his physiognomy attentively, it appeared a little softened. He even assisted me in scrambling up the steep forest, among rocks and brambles. Habit had made him a vigorous mountaineer; but I found it excessively toilsome to climb these rugged heights. We arrived at length at the summit of the mountain.

Here it was that I found all the enthusiasm of my art suddenly awakened; and I forgot in an instant all my perils and fatigues at this magnificent view of the sunrise in the midst of the mountains of the Abruzzi. It was on these heights that Hannibal first pitched his camp, and pointed out Rome to his followers. The eye embraces a vast extent of country. The minor height of Tusculum, with its villas and its sacred ruins, lie below; the Sabine hills and the Albanian mountains stretch on either hand; and beyond Tusculum and Frascati spreads out the immense Campagna, with its lines of tombs, and here and there a broken aqueduct stretching across it, and the towers and domes of the eternal city in the midst.

Fancy this scene lit up by the glories of a rising sun, and bursting upon my sight as I looked forth from among the majestic forests of the Abruzzi. Fancy, too, the savage foreground, made still more savage by groups of banditti, armed and dressed in their wild picturesque manner, and you will not wonder that the enthusiasm of a painter for a moment overpowered all his other feelings.

The banditti were astonished at my admiration of a scene which familiarity had made so common in their eyes. I took advantage

of their halting at this spot, drew forth a quire of drawing-paper, and began to sketch the features of the landscape. The height on which I was seated was wild and solitary, separated from the ridge of Tusculum by a valley nearly three miles wide, though the distance appeared less from the purity of the atmosphere. This height was one of the favourite retreats of the banditti, commanding a look-out over the country; while at the same time it was covered with forests, and distant from the populous haunts of men.

While I was sketching, my attention was called off for a moment by the cries of birds, and the bleatings of sheep. I looked around, but could see nothing of the animals which uttered them. They were repeated, and appeared to come from the summits of the trees. On looking more narrowly, I perceived six of the robbers perched in the tops of oaks, which grew on the breezy crest of the mountain, and commanded an uninterrupted prospect. They were keeping a look out like so many vultures; casting their eyes into the depths of the valley below us; communicating with each other by signs, or holding discourse in sounds which might be mistaken by the wayfarer for the cries of hawks and crows, or the bleating of the mountain flocks. After they had reconnoitered the neighbourhood, and finished their singular discourse, they descended from their airy perch, and returned to their prisoners. The captain posted three of them at three naked sides of the mountain, while he remained to guard us with what appeared his most trusty companion.

I had my book of sketches in my hand; he requested to see it, and after having run his eye over it, expressed himself convinced of the truth of my assertion that I was a painter. I thought I saw a gleam of good feeling dawning in him, and determined to avail myself of it. I knew that the worst of men have their good points and their accessible sides, if one would but study them carefully. Indeed, there is a singular mixture in the character of the Italian robber. With reckless ferocity he often mingles traits of kindness and good-humour. He is not always radically bad; but driven to his course of life by some unpremeditated crime, the effect of those sudden bursts of passion to which the Italian temperament is prone. This has compelled him to take to the mountains, or, as it is technically termed among them, "andare in campagna." He has become a robber by profession; but, like a soldier, when not in action he can lay aside his weapon and his fierceness, and become like other men.

I took occasion, from the observations of the captain on my sketchings, to fall into conversation with him, and found him sociable and communicative. By degrees I became completely at my ease with him. I had fancied I perceived about him a degree of self-love, which I determined to make use of. I assumed an air of careless frankness, and told him, that, as an artist, I pretended to the power of judging of the physiognomy; that I thought I per-

ceived something in his features and demeanour which announced him worthy of higher fortunes; that he was not formed to exercise the profession to which he abandoned himself; that he had talents and qualities fitted for a nobler sphere of action; that he had but to change his course of life, and, in a legitimate career, the same courage and endowments which now made him an object of terror, would assure him the applause and admiration of society.

I had not mistaken my man; my discourse both touched and excited him. He seized my hand, pressed it, and replied with strong emotion—"You have guessed the truth; you have judged of me rightly." He remained for a moment silent; then with a kind of effort, he resumed—"I will tell you some particulars of my life, and you will perceive that it was the oppression of others, rather than my own crimes, which drove me to the mountains. I sought to serve my fellow-men, and they have persecuted me from among them." We seated ourselves on the grass, and the robber gave me the following anecdotes of his history.

THE STORY OF THE BANDIT CHIEFTAIN.

I AM a native of the village of Prossedi. My father was easy enough in circumstances, and we lived peaceably and independently, cultivating our fields. All went on well with us until a new chief of the Sbirri was sent to our village to take command of the police. He was an arbitrary fellow, prying into everything, and practising all sorts of vexations and oppressions in the discharge of his office. I was at that time eighteen years of age, and had a natural love of justice and good neighbourhood. I had also a little education, and knew something of history, so as to be able to judge a little of men and their actions. All this inspired me with hatred for this paltry despot. My own family, also, became the object of his suspicion or dislike, and felt more than once the arbitrary abuse of his po ver. These things worked together in my mind, and I gasped after vengeance. My character was always ardent and energetic, and, acted upon by the love of justice, determined me, by one blow, to rid the country of the tyrant.

Full of my project, I rose one morning before peep of day, and concealing a stiletto under my waistcoat—here you see it!—(and he drew forth a long keen poniard) I lay in wait for him in the outskirts of the village. I knew all his haunts, and his habit of making his rounds and prowling about like a wolf in the grey of the morning. At length I met him, and attacked him with fury. He was armed, but I took him unawares, and was full of youth and vigour. I gave him repeated blows to make sure work, and laid him lifeless at my feet.

When I was satisfied that I had done for him, I returned with all haste to the village, but had the ill-luck to meet two of the Sbirri as I entered it. They accosted me, and asked if I had seen their chief. I assumed an air of tranquillity, and told them

I had not. They continued on their way, and within a few hours brought back the dead body to Prossedi. Their suspicions of me being already awakened, I was arrested and thrown into prison. Here I lay several weeks, when the Prince, who was Seigneur of Prossedi, directed judicial proceedings against me. I was brought to trial, and a witness was produced, who pretended to have seen me flying with precipitation not far from the bleeding body; and so I was condemned to the galleys for thirty years.

"Curse on such laws!" vociferated the bandit, foaming with rage: "Curse on such a government! and ten thousand curses on the Prince who caused me to be adjudged so rigorously, while so many other Roman princes harbour and protect assassins a thousand times more culpable! What had I done but what was inspired by a love of justice and my country? Why was my act more culpable than that of Brutus, when he sacrificed Cæsar to the cause of liberty and justice?"

There was something at once both lofty and ludicrous in the rhapsody of this robber chief, thus associating himself with one of the great names of antiquity. It showed, however, that he had at least the merit of knowing the remarkable facts in the history of his country. He became more calm, and resumed his narrative.

I was conducted to Civita Vecchia in fetters. My heart was burning with rage. I had been married scarce six months to a woman whom I passionately loved, and who was pregnant. My family was in despair. For a long time I made unsuccessful efforts to break my chain. At length I found a morsel of iron, which I hid carefully, and endeavoured, with a pointed flint, to fashion it into a kind of file. I occupied myself in this work during the night-time, and when it was finished, I made out, after a long time, to sever one of the rings of my chain. My flight was successful.

I wandered for several weeks in the mountains which surround Prossedi, and found means to inform my wife of the place where I was concealed. She came often to see me. I had determined to put myself at the head of an armed band. She endeavoured, for a long time, to dissuade me, but finding my resolution fixed, she at length united in my project of vengeance, and brought me, herself, my poniard. By her means I communicated with several brave fellows of the neighbouring villages, whom I knew to be ready to take to the mountains, and only panting for an opportunity to exercise their daring spirits. We soon formed a combination, procured arms, and we have had ample opportunities of revenging ourselves for the wrongs and injuries which most of us have suffered. Everything has succeeded with us until now, and had it not been for our blunder in mistaking you for the Prince, our fortunes would have been made.

Here the robber concluded his story. He had talked himself into complete companionship, and assured me he no longer bore

me any grudge for the error of which I had been the innocent cause. He even professed a kindness for me, and wished me to remain some time with them. He promised to give me a sight of certain grottos which they occupied beyond Villetri, and whither they resorted during the intervals of their expeditions.

He assured me that they led a jovial life there; had plenty of good cheer; slept on beds of moss; and were waited upon by young and beautiful females, whom I might take for models.

I confess I felt my curiosity roused by his descriptions of the grottos and their inhabitants: they realized those scenes in robber story which I had always looked upon as mere creations of the fancy. I should gladly have accepted his invitation, and paid a visit to these caverns, could I have felt more secure in my company.

I began to find my situation less painful. I had evidently propitiated the good will of the chieftain, and hoped that he might release me for a moderate ransom. A new alarm, however, awaited me. While the captain was looking out with impatience for the return of the messenger who had been sent to the Prince, the sentinel posted on the side of the mountain facing the plain of La Molara came running towards us. "We are betrayed!" exclaimed he. "The police of Frascati are after us. A party of carabineers have just stopped at the inn below the mountain." Then, laying his hand on his stiletto, he swore, with a terrible oath, that if they made the least movement towards the mountain, my life and the lives of my fellow-prisoners should answer for it.

The chieftain resumed all his ferocity of demeanour, and approved of what his companion said; but when the latter had returned to his post, he turned to me with a softened air: "I must act as chief," said he, "and humour my dangerous subalterns. It is a law with us to kill all our prisoners rather than suffer them to be rescued; but do not be alarmed. In case we are surprised, keep by me; fly with us, and I will consider myself responsible for your life."

There was nothing very consolotary in this arrangement, which would have placed me between two dangers. I scarcely knew, in case of flight, from which I should have the most to apprehend, the carbines of the pursuers, or the stilettos of the pursued. I remained silent, however, and endeavoured to maintain a look of tranquillity.

For an hour was I kept in this state of peril and anxiety. The robbers, crouching among their leafy coverts, kept an eagle watch upon the carabineers below, as they loitered about the inn; sometimes lolling about the portal; sometimes disappearing for several minutes; then sallying out, examining their weapons, pointing in different directions, and apparently asking questions about the neighbourhood. Not a movement, a gesture, was lost upon the keen eyes of the brigands. At length we were relieved from our apprehensions. The carabineers having finished their refreshment,

seized their arms, continued along the valley towards the great road, and gradually left the mountain behind them. "I felt almost certain," said the chief, "that they could not be sent after us. They know too well how prisoners have fared in our hands on similar occasions. Our laws in this respect are inflexible, and are necessary for our safety. If we once flinched from them, there would no longer be such a thing as a ransom to be procured."

There were no signs yet of the messenger's return. I was preparing to resume my sketching, when the captain drew a quire of paper from his knapsack. "Come," said he, laughing, "you are a painter,—take my likeness. The leaves of your portfolio are small,—draw it on this." I gladly consented, for it was a study that seldom presents itself to a painter. I recollected that Salvator Rosa, in his youth, had voluntarily sojourned for a time among the banditti of Calabria, and had filled his mind with the savage scenery and savage associates by which he was surrounded. I seized my pencil with enthusiasm at the thought. I found the captain the most docile of subjects, and, after various shiftings of position, placed him in an attitude to my mind.

Picture to yourself a stern muscular figure, in fanciful bandit costume; with pistols and poniards in belt; his brawny neck bare; a handkerchief loosely thrown round it, and the two ends in front strung with rings of all kinds, the spoils of travellers; relics and medals hanging on his breast; his hat decorated with various coloured ribands; his vest and short breeches of bright colours, and finely embroidered; his legs in buskins or leggins. Fancy him on a mountain height, among wild rocks and rugged oaks, leaning on his carbine, as if meditating some exploit; while far below are beheld villages and villas, the scenes of his maraudings, with the wide Campagna dimly extending in the distance.

The robber was pleased with the sketch, and seemed to admire himself upon paper. I had scarcely finished, when the labourer arrived who had been sent for my ransom. He had reached Tusculum two hours after midnight. He brought me a letter from the Prince, who was in bed at the time of his arrival. As I had predicted, he treated the demand as extravagant, but offered five hundred dollars for my ransom. Having no money by him at the moment, he had sent a note for the amount, payable to whomsoever should conduct me safe and sound to Rome. I presented the note of hand to the chieftain; he received it with a shrug. "Of what use are notes of hand to us?" said he. "Who can we send with you to Rome to receive it? We are all marked men; known and described at every gate and military post and village church door. No; we must have gold and silver; let the sum be paid in cash, and you shall be restored to liberty."

The captain again placed a sheet of paper before me to communicate his determination to the Prince. When I had finished

the letter, and took the sheet from the quire, I found on the opposite side of it the portrait which I had just been tracing. I was about to tear it off and give it to the chief.

"Hold!" said he, "let it go to Rome; let them see what kind of looking fellow I am. Perhaps the Prince and his friends may form as good an opinion of me from my face as you have done."

This was said sportively, yet it was evident there was vanity lurking at the bottom. Even this wary, distrustful chief of banditti forgot for a moment his usual foresight and precaution, in the common wish to be admired. He never reflected what use might be made of this portrait in his pursuit and conviction.

The letter was folded and directed, and the messenger departed again for Tusculum. It was now eleven o'clock in the morning, and as yet we had eaten nothing. In spite of all my anxiety, I began to feel a craving appetite. I was glad therefore to hear the captain talk something about eating. He observed that for three days and nights they had been lurking about among rocks and woods, meditating their expedition to Tusculum, during which time all their provisions had been exhausted. He should now take measures to procure a supply. Leaving me therefore in charge of his comrade, in whom he appeared to have implicit confidence, he departed, assuring me that in less than two hours we should make a good dinner. Where it was to come from was an enigma to me, though it was evident these beings had their secret friends and agents throughout the country.

Indeed, the inhabitants of these mountains, and of the valleys which they embosom, are a rude, half-civilized set. The towns and villages among the forests of the Abruzzi, shut up from the rest of the world, are almost like savage dens. It is wonderful that such rude abodes, so little known and visited, should be embosomed in the midst of one of the most travelled and civilized countries of Europe. Among these regions the robber prowls unmolested; not a mountaineer hesitates to give him secret harbour and assistance. The shepherds, however, who tend their flocks among the mountains, are the favourite emissaries of the robbers, when they would send messages down to the valleys either for ransom or supplies.

The shepherds of the Abruzzi are as wild as the scenes they frequent. They are clad in a rude garb of black or brown sheepskin; they have high conical hats, and coarse sandals of cloth bound round their legs with thongs, similar to those worn by the robbers. They carry long staves, on which, as they lean, they form picturesque objects in the lonely landscape, and they are followed by their ever-constant companion, the dog. They are a curious, questioning set, glad at any time to relieve the monotony of their solitude by the conversation of the passer-by; and the dog will lend an attentive ear, and put on as sagacious and inquisitive a look as his master.

But I am wandering from my story. I was now left alone with one of the robbers, the confidential companion of the chief. He was the youngest and most vigorous of the band; and though his countenance had something of that dissolute fierceness which seems natural to this desperate, lawless mode of life, yet there were traces of manly beauty about it. As an artist I could not but admire it. I had remarked in him an air of abstraction and reverie, and at times a movement of inward suffering and impatience. He now sat on the ground, his elbows on his knees, his head resting between his clenched fists, and his eyes fixed on the earth with an expression of sad and bitter rumination. I had grown familiar with him from repeated conversations, and had found him superior in mind to the rest of the band. I was anxious to seize any opportunity of sounding the feelings of these singular beings. I fancied I read in the countenance of this one traces of self-condemnation and remorse; and the ease with which I had drawn forth the confidence of the chieftain encouraged me to hope the same with his follower.

After a little preliminary conversation, I ventured to ask him if he did not feel regret at having abandoned his family, and taken to this dangerous profession. "I feel," replied he, "but one regret, and that will end only with my life."

As he said this, he pressed his clenched fists upon his bosom, drew his breath through his set teeth, and added, with a deep emotion, "I have something within here that stifles me; it is like a burning iron consuming my very heart. I could tell you a miserable story—but not now—another time."

He relapsed into his former position, and sat with his head between his hands, muttering to himself in broken ejaculations, and what appeared at times to be curses and maledictions. I saw he was not in a mood to be disturbed, so I left him to himself. In a little while the exhaustion of his feelings, and probably the fatigues he had undergone in this expedition, began to produce drowsiness. He struggled with it for a time, but the warmth and stillness of mid-day made it irresistible, and he at length stretched himself upon the herbage and fell asleep.

I now beheld a chance of escape within my reach. My guard lay before me at my mercy. His vigorous limbs relaxed by sleep —his bosom open for the blow—his carbine slipped from his nerveless grasp, and lying by his side—his stiletto half out of the pocket in which it was usually carried. Two only of his comrades were in sight, and those at a considerable distance on the edge of the mountain, their backs turned to us, and their attention occupied in keeping a look-out upon the plain. Through a strip of intervening forest, and at the foot of a deep descent, I beheld the village of Rocca Priori. To have secured the carbine of the sleeping brigand; to have seized upon his poniard, and have plunged it in his heart, would have been the work of an instant.

Should he die without noise, I might dart through the forest, and down to Rocca Priori before my flight might be discovered. In case of alarm, I should still have a fair start of the robbers, and a chance of getting beyond the reach of their shot.

Here then was an opportunity for both escape and vengeance; perilous indeed, but powerfully tempting. Had my situation been more critical I could not have resisted it. I reflected, however, for a moment. The attempt, if successful, would be followed by the sacrifice of my two fellow-prisoners, who were sleeping profoundly, and could not be awakened in time to escape. The labourer who had gone after the ransom might also fall a victim to the rage of the robbers, without the money which he brought being saved. Besides, the conduct of the chief towards me made me feel confident of speedy deliverance. These reflections overcame the first powerful impulse, and I calmed the turbulent agitation which it had awakened.

I again took out my materials for drawing, and amused myself with sketching the magnificent prospect. It was now about noon, and everything had sunk into repose, like the sleeping bandit before me. The noontide stillness that reigned over these mountains, the vast landscape below, gleaming with distant towns, and dotted with various habitations and signs of life, yet all so silent, had a powerful effect upon my mind. The intermediate valleys, too, which lie among the mountains, have a peculiar air of solitude. Few sounds are heard at mid-day to break the quiet of the scene. Sometimes the whistle of a solitary muleteer, lagging with his lazy animal along the road which winds through the centre of the valley; sometimes the faint piping of a shepherd's reed from the side of the mountain, or sometimes the bell of an ass slowly pacing along, followed by a monk with bare feet, and bare, shining head, and carrying provisions to his convent.

I had continued to sketch for some time among my sleeping companions, when at length I saw the captain of the band approaching, followed by a peasant leading a mule, on which was a well-filled sack. I at first apprehended that this was some new prey fallen into the hands of the robbers; but the contented look of the peasant soon relieved me, and I was rejoiced to hear that it was our promised repast. The brigands now came running from the three sides of the mountain, having the quick scent of vultures. Every one busied himself in unloading the mule, and relieving the sack of its contents.

The first thing that made its appearance was an enormous ham, of a colour and plumpness that would have inspired the pencil of Teniers; it was followed by a large cheese, a bag of boiled chestnuts, a little barrel of wine, and a quantity of good household bread. Everything was arranged on the grass with a degree of symmetry; and the captain presenting me with his knife, requested me to help myself. We all seated ourselves round the

viands, and nothing was heard for a time but the sound of vigorous mastication, or the gurgling of the barrel of wine as it revolved briskly about the circle. My long fasting, and the mountain air and exercise, had given me a keen appetite, and never did repast appear to me more excellent or picturesque.

From time to time one of the band was despatched to keep a look-out upon the plain. No enemy was at hand, and the dinner was undisturbed. The peasant received nearly three times the value of his provisions, and set off down the mountain highly satisfied with his bargain. I felt invigorated by the hearty meal I had made, and notwithstanding that the wound I had received the evening before was painful, yet I could not but feel extremely interested and gratified by the singular scenes continually presented to me. Everything was picturesque about these wild beings and their haunts. Their bivouacs; their groups on guard; their indolent noontide repose on the mountain-brow; their rude repast on the herbage among rocks and trees; everything presented a study for a painter: but it was towards the approach of evening that I felt the highest enthusiasm awakened.

The setting sun, declining beyond the vast Campagna, shed its rich yellow beams on the woody summit of the Abruzzi. Several mountains crowned with snow, shone brilliantly in the distance, contrasting their brightness with others, which, thrown into shade, assumed deep tints of purple and violet. As the evening advanced, the landscape darkened into a sterner character. The immense solitude around; the wild mountains broken into rocks and precipices, intermingled with vast oaks, corks and chestnuts; and the groups of banditti in the foreground, reminded me of the savage scenes of Salvator Rosa.

To beguile the time, the captain proposed to his comrades to spread before me their jewels and cameos, as I must doubtless be a judge of such articles, and able to form an estimate of their value. He set the example, the others followed it; and in a few moments I saw the grass before me sparkling with jewels and gems that would have delighted the eyes of an antiquary or a fine lady.

Among them were several precious jewels, and antique intaglios and cameos of great value; the spoils, doubtless, of travellers of distinction. I found that they were in the habit of selling their booty in the frontier towns; but as these in general were thinly and poorly peopled, and little frequented by travellers, they could offer no market for such valuable articles of taste and luxury. I suggested to them the certainty of their readily obtaining great prices for these gems among the rich strangers with whom Rome was thronged.

The impression made upon their greedy minds was immediately apparent. One of the band, a young man, and the least known, requested permission of the captain to depart the following day, in disguise, for Rome, for the purpose of traffic; promising, on the

faith of a bandit, (a sacred pledge among them,) to return in two days to any place he might appoint. The captain consented, and a curious scene took place; the robbers crowded round him eagerly, confiding to him such of their jewels as they wished to dispose of, and giving him instructions what to demand. There was much bargaining and exchanging and selling of trinkets among them; and I beheld my watch, which had a chain and valuable seals, purchased by the young robber-merchant of the ruffian who had plundered me, for sixty dollars. I now conceived a faint hope, that if it went to Rome, I might somehow or other regain possession of it.*

In the meantime day declined, and no messenger returned from Tusculum. The idea of passing another night in the woods was extremely disheartening, for I began to be satisfied with what I had seen of robber-life. The chieftain now ordered his men to follow him, that he might station them at their posts; adding, that if the messenger did not return before night, they must shift their quarters to some other place.

I was again left alone with the young bandit who had before guarded me; he had the same gloomy air, and haggard eye, with now and then a bitter sardonic smile. I was determined to probe this ulcerated heart, and reminded him of a kind promise he had given me to tell me the cause of his suffering. It seemed to me as if these troubled spirits were glad of any opportunity to disburden themselves, and of having some fresh, undiseased mind, with which they could communicate. I had hardly made the request, when he seated himself by my side, and gave me his story in, as nearly as I can recollect, the following words.

THE STORY OF THE YOUNG ROBBER.

I was born in the little town of Frosinone, which lies at the skirts of the Abruzzi. My father had made a little property in trade, and gave me some education, as he intended me for the church; but I had kept gay company too much to relish the cowl, so I grew up a loiterer about the place. I was a heedless fellow, a little quarrelsome on occasion, but good-humoured in the main; so I made my way very well for a time, until I fell in love. There lived in our town a surveyor or land-bailiff of the prince, who had a young daughter, a beautiful girl of sixteen; she was looked upon as something better than the common run of our townsfolk, and was kept almost entirely at home. I saw her occasionally, and became madly in love with her—she looked so fresh and tender, and so different from the sunburnt females to whom I had been accustomed.

* The hopes of the artist were not disappointed—the robber was stopped at one of the gates of Rome. Something in his looks or deportment had excited suspicion. He was searched, and the valuable trinkets found on him sufficiently evinced his character. On applying to the police, the artist's watch was returned to him.

As my father kept me in money, I always dressed well, and took all opportunities of showing myself off to advantage in the eyes of the little beauty. I used to see her at church; and as I could play a little upon the guitar, I gave a tune sometimes under her window of an evening; and I tried to have interviews with her in her father's vineyard, not far from the town, where she sometimes walked. She was evidently pleased with me, but she was young and shy; and her father kept a strict eye upon her, and took alarm at my attentions, for he had a bad opinion of me, and looked for a better match for his daughter. I became furious at the difficulties thrown in my way, having been accustomed always to easy success among the women, being considered one of the smartest young fellows of the place.

Her father brought home a suitor for her, a rich farmer from a neighbouring town. The wedding-day was appointed, and preparations were making. I got sight of her at her window, and I thought she looked sadly at me. I determined the match should not take place, cost what it might. I met her intended bridegroom in the market-place, and could not restrain the expression of my rage. A few hot words passed between us, when I drew my stiletto and stabbed him to the heart. I fled to a neighbouring church for refuge, and with a little money I obtained absolution, but I did not dare to venture from my asylum.

At that time our captain was forming his troop. He had known me from boyhood; and hearing of my situation, came to me in secret, and made such offers, that I agreed to enroll myself among his followers. Indeed, I had more than once thought of taking to this mode of life, having known several brave fellows of the mountains, who used to spend their money freely among us youngsters of the town. I accordingly left my asylum late one night, repaired to the appointed place of meeting, took the oaths prescribed, and became one of the troop. We were for some time in a distant part of the mountains, and our wild adventurous kind of life hit my fancy wonderfully, and diverted my thoughts. At length they returned with all their violence to the recollection of Rosetta; the solitude in which I often found myself gave me time to brood over her image; and, as I have kept watch at night over our sleeping camp in the mountains, my feelings have been roused almost to a fever.

At length we shifted our ground, and determined to make a descent upon the road between Terracina and Naples. In the course of our expedition we passed a day or two in the woody mountains which rise above Frosinone. I cannot tell you how I felt when I looked down upon the place, and distinguished the residence of Rosetta. I determined to have an interview with her; —but to what purpose? I could not expect that she would quit her home, and accompany me in my hazardous life among the mountains. She had been brought up too tenderly for that; and

when I looked upon the women who were associated with some of our troop, I could not have borne the thoughts of her being their companion. All return to my former life was likewise hopeless, for a price was set upon my head. Still I determined to see her; the very hazard and fruitlessness of the thing made me furious to accomplish it.

About three weeks since, I persuaded our captain to draw down to the vicinity of Frosinone, suggesting the chance of entrapping some of its principal inhabitants, and compelling them to a ransom. We were lying in ambush towards evening, not far from the vineyard of Rosetta's father. I stole quietly from my companions, and drew near to reconnoitre the place of her frequent walks. How my heart beat when among the vines I beheld the gleaming of a white dress! I knew it must be Rosetta's; it being rare for any female of the place to dress in white. I advanced secretly and without noise, until, putting aside the vines, I stood suddenly before her. She uttered a piercing shriek, but I seized her in my arms, put my hand upon her mouth, and conjured her to be silent. I poured out all the frenzy of my passion; offered to renounce my mode of life; to put my fate in her hands; to fly with her where we might live in safety together. All that I could say or do would not pacify her. Instead of love, horror and affright seemed to have taken possession of her breast. She struggled partly from my grasp, and filled the air with her cries.

In an instant the captain and the rest of my companions were around us. I would have given any thing at that moment had she been safe out of our hands, and in her father's house. It was too late. The captain pronounced her a prize, and ordered that she should be borne to the mountains. I represented to him that she was my prize; that I had a previous claim to her; and I mentioned my former attachment. He sneered bitterly in reply; observed that brigands had no business with village intrigues, and that, according to the laws of the troop, all spoils of the kind were determined by lot. Love and jealousy were raging in my heart, but I had to choose between obedience and death. I surrendered her to the captain, and we made for the mountains.

She was overcome by affright, and her steps were so feeble and faltering that it was necessary to support her. I could not endure the idea that my comrades should touch her, and assuming a forced tranquillity, begged she might be confided to me, as one to whom she was more accustomed. The captain regarded me, for a moment, with a searching look, but I bore it without flinching, and he consented. I took her in my arms; she was almost senseless. Her head rested on my shoulder; I felt her breath on my face, and it seemed to fan the flame which devoured me. Oh God! to have this glowing treasure in my arms, and yet to think it was not mine!

We arrived at the foot of the mountain; I ascended it with difficulty, particularly where the woods were thick, but I would

not relinquish my delicious burden. I reflected with rage, however, that I must soon do so. The thought that so delicate a creature must be abandoned to my rude companions maddened me. I felt tempted, the stiletto in my hand, to cut my way through them all, and bear her off in triumph. I scarcely conceived the idea before I saw its rashness; but my brain was fevered with the thought that any but myself should enjoy her charms. I endeavoured to outstrip my companions by the quickness of my movements, and get a little distance ahead, in case any favourable opportunity of escape should present. Vain effort! The voice of the captain suddenly ordered a halt. I trembled, but had to obey. The poor girl partly opened a languid eye, but was without strength or motion. I laid her upon the grass. The captain darted on me a terrible look of suspicion, and ordered me to scour the woods with my companions in search of some shepherd, who might be sent to her father's to demand a ransom.

I saw at once the peril. To resist with violence was certain death—but to leave her alone, in the power of the captain!—I spoke out then with a fervour, inspired by my passion and my despair. I reminded the captain that I was the first to seize her; that she was my prize; and that my previous attachment to her ought to make her sacred among my companions. I insisted, therefore, that he should pledge me his word to respect her, otherwise I should refuse obedience to his orders. His only reply was to cock his carbine, and at the signal my comrades did the same. They laughed with cruelty at my impotent rage. What could I do? I felt the madness of resistance. I was menaced on all hands, and my companions obliged me to follow them. She remained alone with the chief—yes, alone—and almost lifeless!

Here the robber paused in his recital, overpowered by his emotions. Great drops of sweat stood on his forehead; he panted rather than breathed; his brawny bosom rose and fell like the waves of the troubled sea. When he had become a little calm he continued his recital.

I was not long in finding a shepherd, said he. I ran with the rapidity of a deer, eager, if possible, to get back before what I dreaded might take place. I had left my companions far behind, and I rejoined them before they had reached one half the distance I had made. I hurried them back to the place where we had left the captain. As we approached, I beheld him seated by the side of Rosetta. His triumphant look, and the desolate condition of the unfortunate girl, left me no doubt of her fate. I know not how I restrained my fury.

It was with extreme difficulty, and by guiding her hand, that she was made to trace a few characters, requesting her father to send three hundred dollars as her ransom. The letter was despatched by the shepherd. When he was gone, the chief turned sternly to me. "You have set an example," said he, "of mutiny

and self-will, which, if indulged, would be ruinous to the troop. Had I treated you as our laws require, this bullet would have been driven through your brain. But you are an old friend. I have borne patiently with your fury and your folly. I have even protected you from a foolish passion that would have unmanned you. As to this girl, the laws of our association must have their course." So saying, he gave his commands: lots were drawn, and the helpless girl was abandoned to the troop.

Here the robber paused again, panting with fury, and it was some moments before he could resume his story.

Hell, said he, was raging in my heart. I beheld the impossibility of avenging myself; and I felt that, according to the articles in which we stood bound to one another, the captain was in the right. I rushed with frenzy from the place; I threw myself upon the earth; tore up the grass with my hands; and beat my head and gnashed my teeth in agony and rage. When at length I returned, I beheld the wretched victim, pale, dishevelled, her dress torn and disordered. An emotion of pity, for a moment, subdued my fiercer feelings. I bore her to the foot of a tree, and leaned her gently against it. I took my gourd, which was filled with wine, and applying it to her lips, endeavoured to make her swallow a little. To what a condition was she reduced! she, whom I had once seen the pride of Frosinone; who but a short time before I had beheld sporting in her father's vineyard, so fresh, and beautiful, and happy! Her teeth were clenched; her eyes fixed on the ground; her form without motion, and in a state of absolute insensibility. I hung over her in an agony of recollection at all that she had been, and of anguish at what I now beheld her. I darted round a look of horror at my companions, who seemed like so many fiends exulting in the downfall of an angel; and I felt a horror at myself for being their accomplice.

The captain, always suspicious, saw, with his usual penetration, what was passing within me, and ordered me to go upon the ridge of the woods, to keep a look-out over the neighbourhood, and await the return of the shepherd. I obeyed, of course, stifling the fury that raged within me, though I felt, for the moment, that he was my most deadly foe.

On my way, however, a ray of reflection came across my mind. I perceived that the captain was but following, with strictness, the terrible laws to which we had sworn fidelity. That the passion by which I had been blinded might, with justice, have been fatal to me, but for his forbearance; that he had penetrated my soul, and had taken precautions, by sending me out of the way, to prevent my committing any excess in my anger. From that instant I felt that I was capable of pardoning him.

Occupied with these thoughts, I arrived at the foot of the mountain. The country was solitary and secure, and in a short time I beheld the shepherd at a distance, crossing the plain. I

hastened to meet him. He had obtained nothing. He had found the father plunged in the deepest distress. He had read the letter with violent emotion, and then, calming himself with a sudden exertion, he had replied coldly: "My daughter has been dishonoured by those wretches; let her be returned without ransom, —or let her die!"

I shuddered at this reply. I knew that, according to the laws of our troop, her death was inevitable. Our oaths required it. I felt, nevertheless, that not having been able to have her to myself, I could be her executioner!

The robber again paused with agitation. I sat musing upon his last frightful words, which proved to what excess the passions may be carried, when escaped from all moral restraint. There was a horrible verity in this story that reminded me of some of the tragic fictions of Dante.

We now come to a fatal moment, resumed the bandit. After the report of the shepherd, I returned with him, and the chieftain received from his lips the refusal of the father. At a signal which we all understood, we followed him to some distance from the victim. He there pronounced her sentence of death. Every one stood ready to execute his order, but I interfered. I observed that there was something due to pity, as well as to justice. That I was as ready as any one to approve the implacable law, which was to serve as a warning to all those who hesitated to pay the ransoms demanded for our prisoners; but that though the sacrifice was proper, it ought to be made without cruelty. The night is approaching, continued I; she will soon be wrapped in sleep; let her then be despatched. All I now claim on the score of former kindness is, let me strike the blow. I will do it as surely, though more tenderly than another. Several raised their voices against my proposition, but the captain imposed silence on them. He told me I might conduct her into a thicket at some distance, and he relied upon my promise.

I hastened to seize upon my prey. There was a forlorn kind of triumph at having at length become her exclusive possessor. I bore her off into the thickness of the forest. She remained in the same state of insensibility or stupor. I was thankful that she did not recollect me, for had she once murmured my name, I should have been overcome. She slept at length in the arms of him who was to poniard her. Many were the conflicts I underwent before I could bring myself to strike the blow. But my heart had become sore by the recent conflicts it had undergone, and I dreaded lest, by procrastination, some other should become her executioner. When her repose had continued for some time, I separated myself gently from her, that I might not disturb her sleep, and seizing suddenly my poniard, plunged it into her bosom. A painful and concentrated murmur, but without any convulsive movement, accompanied her last sigh.—So perished this unfortunate!

He ceased to speak. I sat, horror-struck, covering my face with my hands, seeking, as it were, to hide from myself the frightful images he had presented to my mind. I was roused from this silence by the voice of the captain: "You sleep," said he, "and it is time to be off. Come, we must abandon this height, as night is setting in, and the messenger is not returned. I will post some one on the mountain edge, to conduct him to the place where we shall pass the night."

This was no agreeable news to me. I was sick at heart with the dismal story I had heard. I was harassed and fatigued, and the sight of the banditti began to grow insupportable to me.

The captain assembled his comrades. We rapidly descended the forest, which we had mounted with so much difficulty in the morning, and soon arrived in what appeared to be a frequented road. The robbers proceeded with great caution, carrying their guns cocked, and looking on every side with wary and suspicious eyes. They were apprehensive of encountering the civic patrole. We left Rocca Priori behind us. There was a fountain near by, and as I was excessively thirsty, I begged permission to stop and drink. The captain himself went and brought me water in his hat. We pursued our route, when, at the extremity of an alley which crossed the road, I perceived a female on horseback, dressed in white. She was alone. I recollected the fate of the poor girl in the story, and trembled for her safety.

One of the brigands saw her at the same instant, and plunging into the bushes, he ran precipitately in the direction towards her. Stopping on the border of the alley, he put one knee to the ground, presented his carbine ready to menace her, or to shoot her horse if she attempted to fly, and in this way awaited her approach. I kept my eyes fixed on her with intense anxiety. I felt tempted to shout and warn her of her danger, though my own destruction would have been the consequence. It was awful to see this tiger crouching ready for a bound, and the poor innocent victim wandering unconsciously near him. Nothing but a mere chance could save her. To my joy the chance turned in her favour. She seemed almost accidentally to take an opposite path, which led outside of the wood, where the robber dared not venture. To this casual deviation she owed her safety.

I could not imagine why the captain of the band had ventured to such a distance from the height on which he had placed the sentinel to watch the return of the messenger. He seemed himself anxious at the risk to which he exposed himself. His movements were rapid and uneasy; I could scarce keep pace with him. At length, after three hours of what might be termed a forced march, we mounted the extremity of the same woods, the summit of which we had occupied during the day; and I learnt with satisfaction that we had reached our quarters for the night. "You must be fatigued," said the chieftain; "but it was necessary to

survey the environs, so as not to be surprised during the night. Had we met with the famous civic guard of Rocca Priori, you would have seen fine sport." Such was the indefatigable precaution and forethought of this robber chief, who really gave continual evidence of military talent.

The night was magnificent. The moon, rising above the horizon in a cloudless sky, faintly lit up the grand features of the mountain; while lights twinkling here and there, like terrestrial stars in the wide dusky expanse of the landscape, betrayed the lonely cabins of the shepherds. Exhausted by fatigue, and by the many agitations I had experienced, I prepared to sleep, soothed by the hope of approaching deliverance. The captain ordered his companions to collect some dry moss; he arranged with his own hands a kind of mattress and pillow of it, and gave me his ample mantle as a covering. I could not but feel both surprised and gratified by such unexpected attentions on the part of this benevolent cut-throat; for there is nothing more striking than to find the ordinary charities, which are matters of course in common life, flourishing by the side of such stern and sterile crime. It is like finding the tender flowers and fresh herbage of the valley growing among the rocks and cinders of the volcano.

Before I fell asleep I had some further discourse with the captain, who seemed to feel great confidence in me. He referred to our previous conversation of the morning: told me he was weary of his hazardous profession; that he had acquired sufficient property, and was anxious to return to the world, and lead a peaceful life in the bosom of his family. He wished to know whether it was not in my power to procure for him a passport to the United States of America. I applauded his good intentions, and promised to do everything in my power to promote its success. We then parted for the night. I stretched myself upon my couch of moss, which, after my fatigues, felt like a bed of down; and, sheltered by the robber-mantle from humidity, I slept soundly, without waking, until the signal to arise.

It was nearly six o'clock, and the day was just dawning. As the place where we had passed the night was too much exposed, we moved up into the thickness of the woods. A fire was kindled. While there was any flame, the mantles were again extended round it: but when nothing remained but glowing cinders, they were lowered, and the robbers seated themselves in a circle.

The scene before me reminded me of some of those described by Homer. There wanted only the victim on the coals, and the sacred knife to cut off the succulent parts, and distribute them around. My companions might have rivalled the grim warriors of Greece. In place of the noble repasts, however, of Achilles and Agamemnon, I beheld displayed on the grass the remains of the ham which had sustained so vigorous an attack on the preceding evening, accompanied by the relics of the bread, cheese, and wine.

We had scarcely commenced our frugal breakfast, when I heard again an imitation of the bleating of sheep, similar to what I had heard the day before. The captain answered it in the same tone. Two men were soon after seen descending from the woody height, where we had passed the preceding evening. On nearer approach, they proved to be the sentinel and the messenger. The captain rose, and went to meet them. He made a signal for his comrades to join him. They had a short conference, and then returning to me with great eagerness, "Your ransom is paid," said he; "you are free!"

Though I had anticipated deliverance, I cannot tell you what a rush of delight these tidings gave me. I cared not to finish my repast, but prepared to depart. The captain took me by the hand, requested permission to write to me, and begged me not to forget the passport. I replied, that I hoped to be of effectual service to him, and that I relied on his honour to return the Prince's note for five hundred dollars, now that the cash was paid. He regarded me for a moment with surprise, then seeming to recollect himself, "*E giusto,*" said he, "*eccolo—adio!*"* He delivered me the note, pressed my hand once more, and we separated. The labourers were permitted to follow me, and we resumed with joy our road toward Tusculum.

The Frenchman ceased to speak. The party continued, for a few moments, to pace the shore in silence. The story had made a deep impression, particularly on the Venetian lady. At that part which related to the young girl of Frosinone, she was violently affected. Sobs broke from her; she clung closer to her husband, and as she looked up to him as for protection, the moonbeams shining on her beautifully fair countenance, showed it paler than usual, while tears glittered in her fine dark eyes.

"*Corragio, mia vita!*" said he as he gently and fondly tapped the white hand that lay upon his arm.

The party now returned to the inn, and separated for the night. The fair Venetian, though of the sweetest temperament was half out of humour with the Englishman, for a certain slowness of faith which he had evinced throughout the whole evening. She could not understand this dislike to "humbug," as he termed it, which held a kind of sway over him, and seemed to control his opinions and his very actions.

"I'll warrant," said she to her husband, as they retired for the night,—"I'll warrant, with all his affected indifference, this Englishman's heart would quake at the very sight of a bandit."

Her husband gently and good humouredly checked her.

"I have no patience with these Englishmen," said she, as she got into bed—"they are so cold and insensible!"

* It is just—there it is—adieu!

THE ADVENTURE OF THE ENGLISHMAN.

In the morning all was bustle in the inn at Terracina. The procaccio had departed at daybreak on its route towards Rome, but the Englishman was yet to start, and the departure of an English equipage is always enough to keep an inn in a bustle. On this occasion there was more than usual stir, for the Englishman, having much property about him, and having been convinced of the real danger of the road, had applied to the police, and obtained, by dint of liberal pay, an escort of eight dragoons and twelve foot soldiers as far as Fondi. Perhaps, too, there might have been a little ostentation at bottom, though, to say the truth, he had nothing of it in his manner. He moved about, taciturn and reserved as usual, among the gaping crowd; gave laconic orders to John, as he packed away the thousand and one indispensable conveniences of the night; double loaded his pistols with great *sang froid*, and deposited them in the pockets of the carriage; taking no notice of a pair of keen eyes gazing on him from among the herd of loitering idlers.

The fair Venetian now came up with a request, made in her dulcet tones, that he would permit their carriage to proceed under protection of his escort. The Englishman, who was busy loading another pair of his pistols for his servant, and held the ramrod between his teeth, nodded assent as a matter of course, but without lifting up his eyes. The fair Venetian was a little piqued at what she supposed indifference:—"O Dio!" ejaculated she softly as she retired; "Quanto sono insensibili questi Inglesi."

At length, off they set in gallant style. The eight dragoons prancing in front, the twelve foot soldiers marching in rear, and the carriage moving slowly in the centre, to enable the infantry to keep pace with them. They had proceded but a few hundred yards, when it was discovered that some indispensable article had been left behind. In fact, the Englishman's purse was missing, and John was despatched to the inn to search for it. This occasioned a little delay, and the carriage of the Venetians drove slowly on. John came back out of breath and out of humour. The purse was not to be found. His master was irritated; he recollected the very place where it lay; he had not a doubt that the Italian servant had pocketed it. John was again sent back. He returned once more without the purse, but with the landlord and the whole household at his heels. A thousand ejaculations and protestations, accompanied by all sorts of grimaces and contortions —"No purse had been seen—his eccellenza must be mistaken."

"No—his eccellenza was not mistaken—the purse lay on the marble table, under the mirror, a green purse, half full of gold and silver." Again a thousand grimaces and contortions, and vows by San Gennaro, that no purse of the kind had been seen.

The Englishman became furious. "The waiter had pocketed

it—the landlord was a knave—the inn a den of thieves—it was a vile country—he had been cheated and plundered from one end of it to the other—but he'd have satisfaction—he'd drive right off to the police."

He was on the point of ordering the postilions to turn back, when, on rising, he displaced the cushion of the carriage, and the purse of money fell chinking to the floor.

All the blood in his body seemed to rush into his face—"Curse the purse," said he, as he snatched it up. He dashed a handful of money on the ground before the pale cringing waiter—"There—be off!" cried he. "John, order the postilions to drive on."

Above half an hour had been exhausted in this altercation. The Venetian carriage had loitered along; its passengers looking out from time to time, and expecting the escort every moment to follow. They had gradually turned an angle of the road that shut them out of sight. The little army was again in motion, and made a very picturesque appearance as it wound along at the bottom of the rocks; the morning sunshine beaming upon the weapons of the soldiery.

The Englishman lolled back in his carriage, vexed with himself at what had passed, and consequently out of humour with all the world. As this, however, is no uncommon case with gentlemen who travel for their pleasure, it is hardly worthy of remark. They had wound up from the coast among the hills, and came to a part of the road that admitted of some prospect ahead.

"I see nothing of the lady's carriage, sir," said John, leaning down from the coach-box.

"Pish!" said the Englishmen, testily—"don't plague me about the lady's carriage; must I be continually pestered with the concerns of strangers?" John said not another word, for he understood his master's mood.

The road grew more wild and lonely; they were slowly proceeding on a foot-pace up a hill; the dragoons were some distance ahead, and had just reached the summit of the hill, when they uttered an exclamation, or rather shout, and galloped forward. The Englishman was roused from his sulky reverie. He stretched his head from the carriage, which had attained the brow of the hill. Before him extended a long hollow defile, commanded on one side by rugged precipitous heights, covered with bushes of scanty forest. At some distance he beheld the carriage of the Venetians overturned. A numerous gang of desperadoes were rifling it; the young man and his servant were overpowered, and partly stripped; and the lady was in the hands of two of the ruffians. The Englishman seized his pistols, sprang from the carriage, and called upon John to follow him.

In the meantime, as the dragoons came forward, the robbers, who were busy with the carriage, quitted their spoil, formed themselves in the middle of the road, and taking a deliberate aim, fired.

One of the dragoons fell, another was wounded, and the whole were for a moment checked and thrown into confusion. The robbers loaded again in an instant. The dragoons discharged their carbines, but without apparent effect. They received another volley, which, though none fell, threw them again into confusion. The robbers were loading a second time, when they saw the foot soldiers at hand. "*Scampa via!*" was the word: they abandoned their prey, and retreated up the rocks, the soldiers after them. They fought from cliff to cliff, and bush to bush, the robbers turning every now and then to fire upon their pursuers; the soldiers scrambling after them, and discharging their muskets whenever they could get a chance. Sometimes a soldier or a robber was shot down, and came tumbling among the cliffs. The dragoons kept firing from below, whenever a robber came in sight.

The Englishman had hastened to the scene of action, and the balls discharged at the dragoons had whistled past him as he advanced. One object, however, engrossed his attention. It was the beautiful Venetian lady, in the hands of two of the robbers, who, during the confusion of the fight, carried her, shrieking, up the mountain. He saw her dress gleaming among the bushes, and he sprang up the rocks to intercept the robbers, as they bore off their prey. The ruggedness of the steep, and the entanglements of the bushes, delayed and impeded him. He lost sight of the lady, but was still guided by her cries, which grew fainter and fainter. They were off to the left, while the reports of muskets showed that the battle was raging to the right. At length he came upon what appeared to be a rugged footpath, faintly worn in a gully of the rocks, and beheld the ruffians at some distance hurrying the lady up the defile. One of them hearing his approach, let go his prey, advanced towards him, and levelling the carbine which had been slung on his back, fired. The ball whizzed through the Englishman's hat, and carried with it some of his hair. He returned the fire with one of his pistols, and the robber fell. The other brigand now dropped the lady, and drawing a long pistol from his belt, fired on his adversary with deliberate aim. The ball passed between his left arm and his side, slightly wounding the arm. The Englishman advanced, and discharged his remaining pistol, which wounded the robber, but not severely.

The brigand drew a stiletto and rushed upon his adversary, who eluded the blow, receiving merely a slight wound, and defended himself with his pistol, which had a spring bayonet. They closed with one another, and a desperate struggle ensued. The robber was a square-built, thick-set man, powerful, muscular, and active. The Englishman, though of larger frame and greater strength, was less active and less accustomed to athletic exercises and feats of hardihood, but he showed himself practised and skilled in the art of defence. They were on a craggy height, and the Englishman perceived that his antagonist was striving to press him to the

edge. A side-glance showed him also the robber whom he had first wounded, scrambling up to the assistance of his comrade, stiletto in hand. He had, in fact, attained the summit of the cliff, he was within a few steps, and the Englishman felt that his case was desperate, when he heard suddenly the report of a pistol, and the ruffian fell. The shot came from John, who had arrived just in time to save his master.

The remaining robber, exhausted by loss of blood and the violence of the contest, showed signs of faltering. The Englishman pursued his advantage, pressed on him, and as his strength relaxed, dashed him headlong from the precipice. He looked after him, and saw him lying motionless among the rocks below.

The Englishman now sought the fair Venetian. He found her senseless on the ground. With his servant's assistance he bore her down to the road, where her husband was raving like one distracted. He had sought her in vain, and had given her over for lost; and when he beheld her thus brought back in safety, his joy was equally wild and ungovernable. He would have caught her insensible form to his bosom had not the Englishman restrained him. The latter, now really aroused, displayed a true tenderness and manly gallantry, which one would not have expected from his habitual phlegm. His kindness, however, was practical, not wasted in words. He despatched John to the carriage for restoratives of all kinds, and, totally thoughtless of himself, was anxious only about his lovely charge. The occasional discharge of fire-arms along the height, showed that a retreating fight was still kept up by the robbers. The lady gave signs of reviving animation. The Englishman, eager to get her from this place of danger, conveyed her to his own carriage, and, committing her to the care of her husband, ordered the dragoons to escort them to Fondi. The Venetian would have insisted on the Englishman's getting into the carriage; but the latter refused. He poured forth a torrent of thanks and benedictions; but the Englishman beckoned to the postilions to drive on.

John now dressed his master's wounds, which were found not to be serious, though he was faint with loss of blood. The Venetian carriage had been righted, and the baggage replaced; and, getting into it, they set out on their way towards Fondi, leaving the foot-soldiers still engaged in ferreting out the banditti.

Before arriving at Fondi, the fair Venetian had completely recovered from her swoon. She made the usual question—

"Where was she?"

"In the Englishman's carriage."

"How had she escaped from the robbers?"

"The Englishman had rescued her."

Her transports were unbounded; and mingled with them were enthusiastic ejaculations of gratitude to her deliverer. A thousand times did she reproach herself for having accused him of coldness

and insensibility. The moment she saw him she rushed into his arms with the vivacity of her nation, and hung about his neck in a speechless transport of gratitude. Never was man more embarrassed by the embraces of a fine woman.

"Tut!—tut!" said the Englishman.

"You are wounded!" shrieked the fair Venetian, as she saw blood upon his clothes.

"Pooh! nothing at all!"

"My deliverer!—my angel!" exclaimed she, clasping him again round the neck, and sobbing on his bosom.

"Pish!" said the Englishman, with a good-humoured tone, but looking somewhat foolish, "this is all humbug."

The fair Venetian, however, has never since accused the English of insensibility.

PART IV.

THE MONEY-DIGGERS.

FOUND AMONG THE PAPERS OF THE LATE DIEDRICH KNICKERBOCKER.

> Now I remember those old women's words,
> Who in my youth would tell me winter's tales;
> And speak of sprites and ghosts that glide by night
> About the place where treasure hath been hid.
>
> MARLOW'S *Jew of Malta*.

HELL-GATE.

ABOUT six miles from the renowned city of the Manhattoes, in that Sound or arm of the sea which passes between the main-land and Nassau, or Long Island, there is a narrow strait, where the current is violently compressed between shouldering promontories, and horribly perplexed by rocks and shoals. Being at the best of times a very violent, impetuous current, it takes these impediments in mighty dudgeon; boiling in whirlpools; brawling and fretting in ripples; raging and roaring in rapids and breakers; and, in short, indulging in all kinds of wrong-headed paroxysms. At such times, woe to any unlucky vessel that ventures within its clutches!

This termagant humour, however, prevails only at certain times of tide. At low water, for instance, it is as pacific a stream as you would wish to see; but as the tide rises, it begins to fret; at half-tide it roars with might and main, like a bull bellowing for more drink; but when the tide is full, it relapses into quiet, and, for a time, sleeps as soundly as an alderman after dinner. In fact, it may be compared to a quarrelsome toper, who is a peaceable fellow enough when he has no liquor at all, or when he has a skinfull, but who, when half-seas-over, plays the very devil.

This mighty blustering, bullying, hard-drinking little strait, was a place of great danger and perplexity to the Dutch navigators of ancient days; hectoring their tub-built barks in a most unruly

style; whirling them about in a manner to make any but a Dutchman giddy, and not unfrequently stranding them upon rocks and reefs, as it did the famous squadron of Oloffe the Dreamer, when seeking a place to found the city of the Manhattoes. Whereupon, out of sheer spleen, they denominated it *Helle-gat*, and solemnly gave it over to the devil. This appellation has since been aptly rendered into English by the name of Hell-gate, and into nonsense by the name of *Hurl*-gate, according to certain foreign intruders, who neither understood Dutch nor English—may St. Nicholas confound them!

This strait of Hell-gate was a place of great awe and perilous enterprise to me in my boyhood; having been much of a navigator on those small seas, and having more than once run the risk of shipwreck and drowning in the course of certain holiday voyages, to which, in common with other Dutch urchins, I was rather prone. Indeed, partly from the name, and partly from various strange circumstances connected with it, this place had far more terrors in the eyes of my truant companions and myself than had Scylla and Charybdis for the navigators of yore.

In the midst of this strait, and hard by a group of rocks called the Hen and Chickens, there lay the wreck of a vessel which had been entangled in the whirlpools and stranded during a storm. There was a wild story told to us of this being the wreck of a pirate, and some tale of bloody murder which I cannot now recollect, but which made us regard it with great awe, and keep far from it in our cruisings. Indeed, the desolate look of the forlorn hulk, and the fearful place where it lay rotting, were enough to awaken strange notions. A row of timber-heads, blackened by time, just peered above the surface at high water; but at low tide a considerable part of the hull was bare, and its great ribs or timbers, partly stripped of their planks and dripping with sea-weeds, looked like the huge skeleton of some sea-monster. There was also the stump of a mast, with a few ropes and blocks swinging about and whistling in the wind, while the sea-gull wheeled and screamed around the melancholy carcass. I have a faint recollection of some hobgoblin tale of sailors' ghosts being seen about this wreck at night, with bare skulls, and blue lights in their sockets instead of eyes, but I have forgotten all the particulars.

In fact, the whole of this neighbourhood was like the straits of Pelorus of yore, a region of fable and romance to me. From the strait to the Manhattoes the borders of the Sound are greatly diversified, being broken and indented by rocky nooks overhung with trees, which give them a wild and romantic look. In the time of my boyhood, they abounded with traditions about pirates, ghosts, smugglers, and buried money; which had a wonderful effect upon the young minds of my companions and myself.

As I grew to more mature years, I made diligent research after

the truth of these strange traditions; for I have always been a curious investigator of the valuable but obscure branches of the history of my native province. I found infinite difficulty, however, in arriving at any precise information. In seeking to dig up one fact, it is incredible the number of fables that I unearthed. I will say nothing of the devil's stepping-stones, by which the arch-fiend made his retreat from Connecticut to Long Island, across the Sound; seeing the subject is likely to be learnedly treated by a worthy friend and contemporary historian, whom I have furnished with particulars thereof.* Neither will I say anything of the black man in a three-cornered hat, seated in the stern of a jolly-boat, who used to be seen about Hell-gate in stormy weather, and who went by the name of the pirate's *spuke*, (i.e. pirate's ghost,) and whom, it is said, old Governor Stuyvesant once shot with a silver bullet; because I never could meet with any person of staunch credibility who professed to have seen this spectrum, unless it were the widow of Manus Conklen, the blacksmith, of Frogsneck; but then, poor woman, she was a little purblind, and might have been mistaken; though they say she saw farther than other folks in the dark.

All this, however, was but little satisfactory in regard to the tales of pirates and their buried money, about which I was most curious; and the following is all that I could for a long time collect that had anything like an air of authenticity.

KIDD THE PIRATE.

In old times, just after the territory of the New-Netherlands had been wrested from the hands of their High Mightinesses, the Lords States-General of Holland, by King Charles the Second, and while it was as yet in an unquiet state, the province was a great resort of random adventurers, loose livers, and all that class of hap-hazard fellows who live by their wits, and dislike the old-fashioned restraint of law and gospel. Among these, the foremost were the buccaneers. These were rovers of the deep, who perhaps, in time of war had been educated in those schools of piracy, the privateers; but having once tasted the sweets of plunder, had ever retained a hankering after it. There is but a slight step from the privateersman to the pirate; both fight for the love of plunder; only that the latter is the bravest, as he dares both the enemy and the gallows.

But in whatever school they had been taught, the buccaneers that kept about the English colonies were daring fellows, and made sad work in times of peace among the Spanish settlements and Spanish merchantmen. The easy access to the harbour of

* For a very interesting and authentic account of the devil and his stepping-stones, see the valuable Memoir read before the New-York Historical Society, since the death of Mr. Knickerbocker, by his friend, an eminent jurist of the place.

the Manhattoes, the number of hiding-places about its waters, and the laxity of its scarcely-organized government, made it a great rendezvous of the pirates; where they might dispose of their booty, and concert new depredations. As they brought home with them wealthy lading of all kinds, the luxuries of the tropics, and the sumptuous spoils of the Spanish provinces, and disposed of them with the proverbial carelessness of freebooters, they were welcome visitors to the thrifty traders of the Manhattoes. Crews of these desperadoes, therefore, the runagates of every country and every clime, might be seen swaggering in open day about the streets of the little burgh, elbowing its quiet mynheers; trafficking away their rich outlandish plunder at half or quarter price to the wary merchant; and then squandering their prize-money in taverns, drinking, gambling, singing, swearing, shouting, and astounding the neighbourhood with midnight brawl and ruffian revelry.

At length these excesses rose to such a height as to become a scandal to the provinces, and to call loudly for the interposition of government. Measures were accordingly taken to put a stop to the widely-extended evil, and to ferret this vermin brood out of the colonies.

Among the agents employed to execute this purpose was the notorious Captain Kidd. He had long been an equivocal character; one of those nondescript animals of the ocean that are neither fish, flesh, nor fowl. He was somewhat of a trader, something more of a smuggler, with a considerable dash of the picaroon. He had traded for many years among the pirates, in a little rakish, musquito-built vessel, that could run into all kinds of waters. He knew all their haunts and lurking-places; was always hooking about on mysterious voyages; and was as busy as a Mother Cary's chicken in a storm.

This nondescript personage was pitched upon by government as the very man to hunt the pirates by sea, upon the good old maxim of "setting a rogue to catch a rogue;" or as otters are sometimes used to catch their cousins-german, the fish.

Kidd accordingly sailed for New York, in 1695, in a gallant vessel called the Adventure Galley, well armed and duly commissioned. On arriving at his old haunts, however, he shipped his crew on new terms; enlisted a number of his old comrades, lads of the knife and the pistol; and then set sail for the East. Instead of cruising against pirates, he turned pirate himself; steered to the Madeiras, to Bonavista, and Madagascar, and cruised about the entrance of the Red Sea. Here, among other maritime robberies, he captured a rich Quedah merchantman, manned by Moors, though commanded by an Englishman. Kidd would fain have passed this off for a worthy exploit, as being a kind of crusade against the infidels; but government had long since lost all relish for such Christian triumphs.

After roaming the seas, trafficking his prizes, and changing from ship to ship, Kidd had the hardihood to return to Boston, laden with booty, with a crew of swaggering companions at his heels.

Times, however, were changed. The buccaneers could no longer show a whisker in the colonies with impunity. The new governor, Lord Bellamont, had signalized himself by his zeal in extirpating these offenders; and was doubly exasperated against Kidd, having been instrumental in appointing him to the trust which he had betrayed. No sooner, therefore, did he show himself in Boston, than the alarm was given of his reappearance, and measures were taken to arrest this cutpurse of the ocean. The daring character which Kidd had acquired, however, and the desperate fellows who followed like bull-dogs at his heels, caused a little delay in his arrest. He took advantage of this, it is said, to bury the greater part of his treasures, and then carried a high head about the streets of Boston. He even attempted to defend himself when arrested, but was secured and thrown into prison, with his followers. Such was the formidable character of this pirate, and his crew, that it was thought advisable to despatch a frigate to bring them to England. Great exertions were made to screen him from justice, but in vain; he and his comrades were tried, condemned, and hanged at Execution Dock in London. Kidd died hard, for the rope with which he was first tied up broke with his weight, and he tumbled to the ground. He was tied up a second time, and more effectually; hence came, doubtless, the story of Kidd's having a charmed life, and that he had to be twice hanged.

Such is the main outline of Kidd's history; but it has given birth to an innumerable progeny of traditions. The report of his having buried great treasures of gold and jewels before his arrest, set the brains of all the good people along the coast in a ferment. There were rumours on rumours of great sums of money found here and there, sometimes in one part of the country, sometimes in another; of coins with Moorish inscriptions, doubtless the spoils of his eastern prizes, but which the common people looked upon with superstitious awe, regarding the Moorish letters as diabolical or magical characters.

Some reported the treasure to have been buried in solitary unsettled places about Plymouth and Cape Cod; but by degrees various other parts, not only on the eastern coast, but along the shores of the Sound, and even of Manhattan and Long Island, were gilded by these rumours. In fact, the rigorous measures of Lord Bellamont spread sudden consternation among the buccaneers in every part of the provinces: they secreted their money and jewels in lonely out-of-the-way places, about the wild shores of the rivers and sea-coast, and dispersed themselves over the face of the country. The hand of justice prevented many of

them from ever returning to regain their buried treasures, which remained, and remain probably to this day, objects of enterprise for the money-digger.

This is the cause of those frequent reports of trees and rocks bearing mysterious marks, supposed to indicate the spots where treasure lay hidden: and many have been the ransackings after the pirate's booty. In all the stories which once abounded of these enterprises, the devil played a conspicuous part. Either he was conciliated by ceremonies and invocations, or some solemn compact was made with him. Still he was ever prone to play the money-diggers some slippery trick. Some would dig so far as to come to an iron chest, when some baffling circumstance was sure to take place. Either the earth would fall in and fill up the pit, or some direful noise or apparition would frighten the party from the place: sometimes the devil himself would appear, and bear off the prize when within their very grasp; and if they revisited the place the next day, not a trace would be found of their labours of the preceding night.

All these rumours, however, were extremely vague, and for a long time tantalized without gratifying my curiosity. There is nothing in this world so hard to get at as truth, and there is nothing in this world but truth that I care for. I sought among all my favourite sources of authentic information, the oldest inhabitants, and particularly the old Dutch wives of the province; but though I flatter myself that I am better versed than most men in the curious history of my native province, yet for a long time my inquiries were unattended with any substantial result.

At length it happened that, one calm day in the latter part of summer, I was relaxing myself from the toils of severe study, by a day's amusement in fishing in those waters which had been the favourite resort of my boyhood. I was in company with several worthy burghers of my native city, among whom were more than one illustrious member of the corporation, whose names, did I dare to mention them, would do honour to my humble page. Our sport was indifferent. The fish did not bite freely, and we frequently changed our fishing-ground without bettering our luck. We were at length anchored close under a ledge of rocky coast, on the eastern side of the island of Manhatta. It was a still, warm day. The stream whirled and dimpled by us, without a wave or even a ripple; and everything was so calm and quiet, that it was almost startling when the kingfisher would pitch himself from the branch of some high tree, and after suspending himself for a moment in the air to take his aim, would souse into the smooth water after his prey. While we were lolling in our boat, half drowsy with the warm stillness of the day, and the dulness of our sport, one of our party, a worthy alderman, was overtaken by a slumber, and, as he dozed, suffered the sinker of his drop-line to lie upon the bottom of the river. On waking, he found he had caught something of import-

ance from the weight. On drawing it to the surface, we were much surprised to find it a long pistol of very curious and outlandish fashion, which, from its rusted condition, and its stock being worm-eaten and covered with barnacles, appeared to have lain a long time under water. The unexpected appearance of this document of warfare occasioned much speculation among my pacific companions. One supposed it to have fallen there during the revolutionary war; another, from the peculiarity of its fashion, attributed it to the voyagers in the earliest days of the settlement; perchance to the renowned Adrian Block, who explored the Sound, and discovered Block Island, since so noted for its cheese. But a third, after regarding it for some time, pronounced it to be of veritable Spanish workmanship.

"I'll warrant," said he, "if this pistol could talk, it would tell strange stories of hard fights among the Spanish Dons. I've no doubt but it is a relic of the buccaneers of old times—who knows but it belonged to Kidd himself?"

"Ah! that Kidd was a resolute fellow," cried an old iron-faced Cape Cod whaler.—"There's a fine old song about him, all to the tune of—

My name is Captain Kidd,
As I sailed, as I sailed—

And then it tells about how he gained the devil's good graces by burying the Bible:

I had the Bible in my hand,
As I sailed, as I sailed,
And I buried it in the sand
As I sailed.—

"Odsfish, if I thought this pistol had belonged to Kidd, I should set great store by it, for curiosity's sake. By the way, I recollect a story about a fellow who once dug up Kidd's buried money, which was written by a neighbour of mine, and which I learnt by heart. As the fish don't bite just now, I'll tell it to you, by way of passing away the time."—And so saying, he gave us the following narration.

THE DEVIL AND TOM WALKER.

A few miles from Boston in Massachusetts, there is a deep inlet, winding several miles into the interior of the country, from Charles Bay, and terminating in a thickly-wooded swamp or morass. On one side of this inlet is a beautiful dark grove; on the opposite side, the land rises abruptly from the water's edge into a high ridge, on which grow a few scattered oaks of great age, and immense size. Under one of these gigantic trees, according to old stories, there was a great amount of treasure buried by Kidd the pirate. The inlet allowed a facility to bring the money

in a boat secretly, and at night, to the very foot of the hill; the elevation of the place permitted a good look-out to be kept that no one was at hand; while the remarkable trees formed good landmarks by which the place might easily be found again. The old stories add, moreover, that the devil presided at the hiding of the money, and took it under his guardianship; but this, it is well known, he always does with buried treasure, particularly when it has been ill-gotten. Be that as it may, Kidd never returned to recover his wealth, being shortly after seized at Boston, sent out to England, and there hanged for a pirate.

About the year 1727, just at the time that earthquakes were prevalent in New England, and shook many tall sinners down upon their knees, there lived near this place a meagre, miserly fellow, of the name of Tom Walker. He had a wife as miserly as himself; they were so miserly, that they even conspired to cheat each other. Whatever the woman could lay hands on, she hid away; a hen could not cackle, but she was on the alert to secure the new-laid egg. Her husband was continually prying about to detect her secret hoards, and many and fierce were the conflicts that took place about what ought to have been common property. They lived in a forlorn-looking house that stood alone, and had an air of starvation. A few straggling savin-trees, emblems of sterility, grew near it; no smoke ever curled from its chimney, no traveller stopped at its door. A miserable horse, whose ribs were as articulate as the bars of a gridiron, stalked about a field, where a thin carpet of moss, scarcely covering the ragged beds of pudding-stone, tantalized and baulked his hunger; and sometimes he would lean his head over the fence, look piteously at the passer-by, and seem to petition deliverance from this land of famine.

The house and its inmates had altogether a bad name. Tom's wife was a tall termagant, fierce of temper, loud of tongue, and strong of arm. Her voice was often heard in wordy warfare with her husband; and his face sometimes showed signs that their conflicts were not confined to words. No one ventured, however, to interfere between them. The lonely wayfarer shrunk within himself at the horrid clamour and clapper-clawing, eyed the den of discord askance, and hurried on his way, rejoicing, if a bachelor, in his celibacy.

One day that Tom Walker had been to a distant part of the neighbourhood, he took what he considered a short cut homeward, through the swamp. Like most short cuts, it was an ill-chosen route. The swamp was thickly grown with great gloomy pines and hemlocks, some of them ninety feet high, which made it dark at noonday, and a retreat for all the owls of the neighbourhood. It was full of pits and quagmires, partly covered with weeds and mosses, where the green surface often betrayed the traveller into a gulf of black smothering mud; there were also dark and stagnant pools, the abodes of the tadpole, the bull-frog, and the water-

snake; where the trunks of pines and hemlocks lay half drowned, half rotting, looking like alligators sleeping in the mire.

Tom had long been picking his way cautiously through this treacherous forest; stepping from tuft to tuft of rushes and roots, which afforded precarious foot-holds among deep sloughs; or pacing carefully, like a cat, along the prostrate trunks of trees; startled now and then by the sudden screaming of the bittern, or the quacking of a wild duck, rising on the wing from some solitary pool. At length he arrived at a piece of firm ground, which ran out like a peninsula into the deep bosom of the swamp. It had been one of the strong-holds of the Indians during their wars with the first colonists. Here they had thrown up a kind of fort, which they had looked upon as almost impregnable, and had used as a place of refuge for their squaws and children. Nothing remained of the old Indian fort but a few embankments, gradually sinking to the level of the surrounding earth, and already overgrown in part by oaks and other forest trees, the foliage of which formed a contrast to the dark pines and hemlocks of the swamp.

It was late in the dusk of evening when Tom Walker reached the old fort, and he paused there awhile to rest himself. Any one but he would have felt unwilling to linger in this lonely, melancholy place, for the common people had a bad opinion of it, from the stories handed down from the time of the Indian wars; when it was asserted that the savages held incantations here, and made sacrifices to the evil spirit.

Tom Walker, however, was not a man to be troubled with any fears of the kind. He reposed himself for some time on the trunk of a fallen hemlock, listening to the boding cry of the tree toad, and delving with his walking staff into a mound of black mould at his feet. As he turned up the soil unconsciously, his staff struck against something hard. He raked it out of the vegetable mould, and lo! a cloven skull, with an Indian tomahawk buried deep in it, lay before him. The rust on the weapon showed the time that had elapsed since this death-blow had been given. It was a dreary memento of the fierce struggle that had taken place in this last foothold of the Indian warriors.

"Humph!" said Tom Walker, as he gave it a kick to shake the dirt from it.

"Let that skull alone!" said a gruff voice. Tom lifted up his eyes, and beheld a great black man seated directly opposite him, on the stump of a tree. He was exceedingly surprised, having neither heard nor seen any one approach; and he was still more perplexed on observing, as well as the gathering gloom would permit, that the stranger was neither negro nor Indian. It is true he was dressed in a rude half Indian garb, and had a red belt or sash swathed round his body; but his face was neither black nor copper-colour, but swarthy and dingy, and begrimed with soot, as if he had been accustomed to toil among fires and forges. He had

a shock of coarse black hair, that stood out from his head in all directions, and bore an axe on his shoulder.

He scowled for a moment at Tom with a pair of great red eyes.

"What are you doing on my grounds?" said the black man, with a hoarse growling voice.

"Your grounds!" said Tom with a sneer, "no more your grounds than mine; they belong to Deacon Peabody."

"Deacon Peabody be d——d," said the stranger, "as I flatter myself he will be, if he does not look more to his own sins, and less to those of his neighbours. Look yonder, and see how Deacon Peabody is faring."

Tom looked in the direction that the stranger pointed, and beheld one of the great trees, fair and flourishing without, but rotten at the core, and saw that it had been nearly hewn through, so that the first high wind was likely to blow it down. On the bark of the tree was scored the name of Deacon Peabody, an eminent man, who had waxed wealthy by driving shrewd bargains with the Indians. He now looked round, and found most of the tall trees marked with the name of some great man of the colony, and all more or less scored by the axe. The one on which he had been seated, and which had evidently just been hewn down, bore the name of Crowninshield; and he recollected a mighty rich man of that name, who made a vulgar display of wealth, which it was whispered he had acquired by buccancering.

"He's just ready for burning!" said the black man, with a growl of triumph. "You see I am likely to have a good stock of firewood for the winter."

"But what right have you," said Tom, "to cut down Deacon Peabody's timber?"

"The right of a prior claim," said the other. "This wood-land belonged to me long before one of your white-faced race put foot upon the soil."

"And pray, who are you, if I may be so bold?" said Tom.

"Oh, I go by various names. I am the wild huntsman in some countries; the black miner in others. In this neighbourhood I am known by the name of the black woodsman. I am he to whom the red men consecrated this spot, and in honour of whom they now and then roasted a white man, by way of sweet-smelling sacrifice. Since the red men have been exterminated by you white savages, I amuse myself by presiding at the persecutions of Quakers and Anabaptists; I am the great patron and prompter of slave-dealers, and the grand-master of the Salem witches."

"The upshot of all which is, that, if I mistake not," said Tom, sturdily, "you are he commonly called Old Scratch."

"The same, at your service!" replied the black man, with a half civil nod.

Such was the opening of this interview, according to the old story; though it has almost too familiar an air to be credited.

One would think that to meet with such a singular personage, in this wild, lonely place, would have shaken any man's nerves; but Tom was a hard-minded fellow, not easily daunted, and he had lived so long with a termagant wife, that he did not even fear the devil.

It is said that after this commencement they had a long and earnest conversation together, as Tom returned homeward. The black man told him of great sums of money buried by Kidd the pirate, under the oak-trees on the high ridge, not far from the morass. All these were under his command, and protected by his power, so that none could find them but such as propitiated his favour. These he offered to place within Tom Walker's reach, having conceived an especial kindness for him; but they were to be had only on certain conditions. What these conditions were may easily be surmised, though Tom never disclosed them publicly. They must have been very hard, for he required time to think of them, and he was not a man to stick at trifles where money was in view. When they had reached the edge of the swamp, the stranger paused—"What proof have I that all you have been telling me is true?" said Tom. "There is my signature," said the black man, pressing his finger on Tom's forehead. So saying, he turned off among the thickets of the swamp, and seemed, as Tom said, to go down, down, down, into the earth, until nothing but his head and shoulders could be seen, and so on, until he totally disappeared.

When Tom reached home, he found the black print of a finger, burnt, as it were, into his forehead, which nothing could obliterate.

The first news his wife had to tell him was the sudden death of Absalom Crowninshield, the rich buccaneer. It was announced in the papers with the usual flourish, that "A great man had fallen in Israel."

Tom recollected the tree which his black friend had just hewn down, and which was ready for burning, "Let the freebooter roast," said Tom, "who cares!" He now felt convinced that all he had heard and seen was no illusion.

He was not prone to let his wife into his confidence; but as this was an uneasy secret, he willingly shared it with her. All her avarice was awakened at the mention of hidden gold, and she urged her husband to comply with the black man's terms, and secure what would make them wealthy for life. However Tom might have felt disposed to sell himself to the Devil, he was determined not to do so to oblige his wife; so he flatly refused, out of the mere spirit of contradiction. Many and bitter were the quarrels they had on the subject, but the more she talked, the more resolute was Tom not to be damned to please her.

At length she determined to drive the bargain on her own account, and if she succeeded, to keep all the gain to herself. Being of the same fearless temper as her husband, she set off for the old Indian fort towards the close of a summer's day. She was

many hours absent. When she came back, she was reserved and sullen in her replies. She spoke something of a black man, whom she had met about twilight, hewing at the root of a tall tree. He was sulky, however, and would not come to terms: she was to go again with a propitiatory offering, but what it was she forbore to say.

The next evening she sat off again for the swamp, with her apron heavily laden. Tom waited and waited for her, but in vain; midnight came, but she did not make her appearance: morning, noon, night returned, but still she did not come. Tom now grew uneasy for her safety, especially as he found she had carried off in her apron the silver teapot and spoons, and every portable article of value. Another night elapsed, another morning came; but no wife. In a word, she was never heard of more.

What was her real fate nobody knows, in consequence of so many pretending to know. It is one of those facts which have become confounded by a variety of historians. Some asserted that she lost her way among the tangled mazes of the swamp, and sank into some pit or slough; others, more uncharitable, hinted that she had eloped with the household booty, and made off to some other province; while others surmised that the tempter had decoyed her into a dismal quagmire, on the top of which her hat was found lying. In confirmation of this, it was said a great black man, with an axe on his shoulder, was seen late that very evening coming out of the swamp, carrying a bundle tied in a check apron, with an air of surly triumph.

The most current and probable story, however, observes, that Tom Walker grew so anxious about the fate of his wife and his property, that he set out at length to seek them both at the Indian fort. During a long summer's afternoon he searched about the gloomy place, but no wife was to be seen. He called her name repeatedly, but she was nowhere to be heard. The bittern alone responded to his voice, as he flew screaming by; or the bull-frog croaked dolefully from a neighbouring pool. At length, it is said, just in the brown hour of twilight, when the owls began to hoot, and the bats to flit about, his attention was attracted by the clamour of carrion crows hovering about a cypress-tree. He looked up, and beheld a bundle tied in a check apron, and hanging in the branches of the tree, with a great vulture perched hard by, as if keeping watch upon it. He leaped with joy; for he recognised his wife's apron, and supposed it to contain the household valuables.

"Let us get hold of the property," said he, consolingly to himself, "and we will endeavour to do without the woman."

As he scrambled up the tree, the vulture spread its wide wings, and sailed off screaming into the deep shadows of the forest. Tom seized the check apron, but, woful sight! found nothing but a heart and liver tied up in it!

Such, according to the most authentic old story, was all that

was to be found of Tom's wife. She had probably attempted to deal with the black man as she had been accustomed to deal with her husband; but though a female scold is generally considered a match for the devil, yet in this instance she appears to have had the worst of it. She must have died game, however; for it is said Tom noticed many prints of cloven feet deeply stamped about the tree, and found handfuls of hair, that looked as if they had been plucked from the coarse black shock of the woodman. Tom knew his wife's prowess by experience. He shrugged his shoulders, as he looked at the signs of a fierce clapper-clawing. 'Egad," said he to himself, "Old Scratch must have had a tough time of it."

Tom consoled himself for the loss of his property, with the loss of his wife, for he was a man of fortitude. He even felt something like gratitude towards the black woodman, who, he considered, had done him a kindness. He sought, therefore, to cultivate a further acquaintance with him, but for some time without success; the old black-legs played shy, for whatever people may think, he is not always to be had for calling for: he knows how to play his cards when pretty sure of his game.

At length, it is said, when delay had whetted Tom's eagerness to the quick, and prepared him to agree to anything rather than not gain the promised treasure, he met the black man one evening in his usual woodman's dress, with his axe on his shoulder, sauntering along the swamp, and humming a tune. He affected to receive Tom's advances with great indifference, made brief replies, and went on humming his tune.

By degrees, however, Tom brought him to business, and they began to haggle about the terms on which the former was to have the pirate's treasure. There was one condition which need not be mentioned, being generally understood in all cases where the devil grants favours; but there were others about which, though of less importance, he was inflexibly obstinate. He insisted that the money found through his means should be employed in his service. He proposed, therefore, that Tom should employ it in the black traffic; that is to say, that he should fit out a slave-ship. This, however, Tom resolutely refused: he was bad enough in all conscience; but the devil himself could not tempt him to turn slave-trader.

Finding Tom so squeamish on this point, he did not insist upon it, but proposed, instead, that he should turn usurer; the devil being extremely anxious for the increase of usurers, looking upon them as his peculiar people.

To this no objections were made, for it was just to Tom's taste.

"You shall open a broker's shop in Boston next month," said the black man.

"I'll do it to-morrow, if you wish," said Tom Walker.

"You shall lend money at two per cent. a month."

"Egad, I'll charge four!" replied Tom Walker.

"You shall extort bonds, foreclose mortgages, drive the merchant to bankruptcy——"

"I'll drive him to the d——l," cried Tom Walker.

"You are the usurer for my money;" said the black-legs with delight. "When will you want the rhino?"

"This very night."

"Done!" said the devil.

"Done!" said Tom Walker.—So they shook hands and struck a bargain.

A few days' time saw Tom Walker seated behind his desk in a counting-house in Boston.

His reputation for a ready-moneyed man, who would lend money out for a good consideration, soon spread abroad. Every body remembers the time of Governor Belcher, when money was particularly scarce. It was a time of paper credit. The country had been deluged with government bills; the famous Land Bank had been established; there had been a rage for speculating; the people had run mad with schemes for new settlements; for building cities in the wilderness; land-jobbers went about with maps of grants, and townships, and Eldorados, lying nobody knew where, but which every body was ready to purchase. In a word, the great speculating fever which breaks out every now and then in the country, had raged to an alarming degree, and every body was dreaming of making sudden fortunes from nothing. As usual the fever had subsided; the dream had gone off, and the imaginary fortunes with it; the patients were left in doleful plight, and the whole country resounded with the consequent cry of "hard times."

At this propitious time of public distress did Tom Walker set up as usurer in Boston. His door was soon thronged by customers. The needy and adventurous; the gambling speculator; the dreaming land-jobber; the thriftless tradesman; the merchant with cracked credit; in short, every one driven to raise money by desperate means and desperate sacrifices, hurried to Tom Walker.

Thus Tom was the universal friend of the needy, and acted like a "friend in need;" that is to say, he always exacted good pay and good security. In proportion to the distress of the applicant was the hardness of his terms. He accumulated bonds and mortgages; gradually squeezed his customers closer and closer: and sent them at length, dry as a sponge, from his door.

In this way he made money hand over hand; became a rich and mighty man, and exalted his cocked hat upon 'Change. He built himself, as usual, a vast house, out of ostentation; but left the greater part of it unfinished and unfurnished, out of parsimony. He even set up a carriage in the fulness of his vainglory, though he nearly starved the horses which drew it; and as the ungreased wheels groaned and screeched on the axle-trees, you would have thought you heard the souls of the poor debtors he was squeezing.

As Tom waxed old, however, he grew thoughtful. Having secured the good things of this world, he began to feel anxious about those of the next. He thought with regret on the bargain he had made with his black friend, and set his wits to work to cheat him out of the conditions. He became, therefore, all of a sudden, a violent church-goer. He prayed loudly and strenuously, as if heaven were to be taken by force of lungs. Indeed, one might always tell when he had sinned most during the week, by the clamour of his Sunday devotion. The quiet Christians who had been modestly and steadfastly travelling Zionward, were struck with self-reproach at seeing themselves so suddenly outstripped in their career by this new-made convert. Tom was as rigid in religious as in money matters; he was a stern supervisor and censurer of his neighbours, and seemed to think every sin entered up to their account became a credit on his own side of the page. He even talked of the expediency of reviving the persecution of Quakers and Anabaptists. In a word, Tom's zeal became as notorious as his riches.

Still, in spite of all this strenuous attention to forms, Tom had a lurking dread that the devil would, after all, have his due. That he might not be taken unawares, therefore, it is said he always carried a small Bible in his coat-pocket. He had also a great folio Bible on his counting-house desk, and would frequently be found reading it when people called on business; on such occasions he would lay his green spectacles in the book, to mark the place, while he turned round to drive some usurious bargain.

Some say that Tom grew a little crack-brained in his old days, and that fancying his end approaching, he had his horse new shod, saddled and bridled, and buried with his feet uppermost; because he supposed that at the last day the world would be turned upside down; in which case he should find his horse standing ready for mounting, and he was determined at the worst to give his old friend a run for it. This, however, is probably a mere old wives' fable. If he really did take such a precaution, it was totally superfluous; at least so says the authentic old legend, which closes his story in the following manner.

One hot summer afternoon in the dog-days, just as a terrible black thundergust was coming up, Tom sat in his counting-house in his white linen cap and India silk morning-gown. He was on the point of foreclosing a mortgage, by which he would complete the ruin of an unlucky land speculator for whom he had professed the greatest friendship. The poor land-jobber begged him to grant a few months' indulgence. Tom had grown testy and irritated, and refused another day.

"My family will be ruined and brought upon the parish," said the land-jobber. "Charity begins at home," replied Tom; "I must take care of myself in these hard times."

"You have made so much money out of me," said the speculator.

Tom lost his patience and his piety—"The devil take me," said he, "if I have made a farthing!"

Just then there were three loud knocks at the street door. He stepped out to see who was there. A black man was holding a black horse, which neighed and stamped with impatience.

"Tom, you're come for," said the black fellow, gruffly. Tom shrunk back, but too late. He had left his little Bible at the bottom of his coat-pocket, and his big Bible on the desk buried under the mortgage he was about to foreclose: never was sinner taken more unawares. The black man whisked him like a child into the saddle, gave the horse the lash, and away he galloped, with Tom on his back, in the midst of the thunder-storm. The clerks stuck their pens behind their ears, and stared after him from the windows. Away went Tom Walker, dashing down the streets; his white cap bobbing up and down; his morning-gown fluttering in the wind, and his steed striking fire out of the pavement at every bound. When the clerks turned to look for the black man he had disappeared.

Tom Walker never returned to foreclose the mortgage. A countryman who lived on the border of the swamp, reported that in the height of the thundergust he had heard a great clattering of hoofs and a howling along the road, and running to the window caught sight of a figure, such as I have described, on a horse that galloped like mad across the fields, over the hills and down into the black hemlock swamp towards the old Indian fort; and that shortly after a thunderbolt falling in that direction seemed to set the whole forest in a blaze.

The good people of Boston shook their heads and shrugged their shoulders, but had been so much accustomed to witches and goblins and tricks of the devil, in all kinds of shapes from the first settlement of the colony, that they were not so much horror-struck as might have been expected. Trustees were appointed to take charge of Tom's effects. There was nothing, however, to administer upon. On searching his coffers all his bonds and mortgages were found reduced to cinders. In place of gold and silver his iron chest was filled with chips and shavings; two skeletons lay in his stable instead of his half-starved horses, and the very next day his great house took fire and was burnt to the ground.

Such was the end of Tom Walker and his ill-gotten wealth. Let all griping money-brokers lay this story to heart. The truth of it is not to be doubted. The very hole under the oak-trees, whence he dug Kidd's money, is to be seen to this day; and the neighbouring swamp and old Indian fort are often haunted in stormy nights by a figure on horseback, in morning-gown and white cap, which is doubtless the troubled spirit of the usurer. In fact, the story has resolved itself into a proverb, and is the origin of that popular saying, so prevalent throughout New England, of "The Devil and Tom Walker."

Such, as nearly as I can recollect, was the purport of the tale told by the Cape Cod whaler. There were divers trivial particulars which I have omitted, and which whiled away the morning very pleasantly, until the time of tide favourable to fishing being passed, it was proposed to land, and refresh ourselves under the trees, till the noon-tide heat should have abated.

We accordingly landed on a delectable part of the island of Mannahatta, in that shady and embowered tract formerly under the dominion of the ancient family of the Hardenbrooks. It was a spot well known to me in the course of the aquatic expeditions of my boyhood. Not far from where we landed, there was an old Dutch family vault, constructed in the side of a bank, which had been an object of great awe and fable among my schoolboy associates. We had peeped into it during one of our coasting voyages, and been startled by the sight of mouldering coffins and musty bones within; but what had given it the most fearful interest in our eyes, was its being in some way connected with the pirate wreck which lay rotting among the rocks of Hell-gate. There were stories also of smuggling connected with it, particularly relating to a time when this retired spot was owned by a noted burgher called Ready Money Provost; a man of whom it was whispered that he had many and mysterious dealings with parts beyond seas. All these things, however, had been jumbled together in our minds in that vague way in which such themes are mingled up in the tales of boyhood.

While I was pondering upon these matters, my companions had spread a repast, from the contents of our well-stored pannier, under a broad chestnut, on the greensward which swept down to the water's edge. Here we solaced ourselves on the cool grassy carpet during the warm sunny hours of mid-day. While lolling on the grass, indulging in that kind of musing reverie of which I am fond, I summoned up the dusky recollections of my boyhood respecting this place, and repeated them like the imperfectly remembered traces of a dream, for the amusement of my companions. When I had finished, a worthy old burgher, John Josse Vandermoere, the same who once related to me the adventures of Dolph Heyliger, broke silence and observed, that he recollected a story of money-digging which occurred in this very neighbourhood, and might account for some of the traditions which I had heard in my boyhood. As we knew him to be one of the most authentic narrators in the province, we begged him to let us have the particulars, and accordingly, while we solaced ourselves with a clean long pipe of Blase Moore's best tobacco, the authentic John Josse Vandermoere related the following tale.

WOLFERT WEBBER, OR GOLDEN DREAMS.

In the year of grace one thousand seven hundred and—blank —for I do not remember the precise date; however, it was some-

where in the early part of the last century, there lived in the ancient city of the Manhattoes a worthy burgher, Wolfert Webber by name. He was descended from old Cobus Webber of the Brille in Holland, one of the original settlers, famous for introducing the cultivation of cabbages, and who came over to the province during the protectorship of Oloffe Van Kortlandt, otherwise called the dreamer.

The field in which Cobus Webber first planted himself and his cabbages had remained ever since in the family, who continued in the same line of husbandry, with that praiseworthy perseverance for which our Dutch burghers are noted. The whole family genius, during several generations, was devoted to the study and development of this one noble vegetable; and to this concentration of intellect may doubtless be ascribed the prodigious renown to which the Webber cabbages attained.

The Webber dynasty continued in uninterrupted succession; and never did a line give more unquestionable proofs of legitimacy. The eldest son succeeded to the looks, as well as the territory of his sire; and had the portraits of this line of tranquil potentates been taken, they would have presented a row of heads marvellously resembling in shape and magnitude the vegetables over which they reigned.

The seat of government continued unchanged in the family mansion:—a Dutch-built house, with a front, or rather gable-end of yellow brick, tapering to a point, with the customary iron weathercock at the top. Everything about the building bore the air of long-settled ease and security. Flights of martins peopled the little coops nailed against its walls, and swallows built their nests under the eaves; and every one knows that these house-loving birds bring good luck to the dwelling where they take up their abode. In a bright sunny morning in early summer, it was delectable to hear their cheerful notes, as they sported about in the pure sweet air, chirping forth, as it were, the greatness and prosperity of the Webbers.

Thus quietly and comfortably did this excellent family vegetate under the shade of a mighty button-wood tree, which by little and little grew so great as entirely to overshadow their palace. The city gradually spread its suburbs round their domain. Houses sprang up to interrupt their prospects. The rural lanes in the vicinity began to grow into the bustle and populousness of streets; in short, with all the habits of rustic life they began to find themselves the inhabitants of a city. Still, however, they maintained their hereditary character, and hereditary possessions, with all the tenacity of petty German princes in the midst of the empire. Wolfert was the last of the line, and succeeded to the patriarchal bench at the door, under the family tree, and swayed the sceptre of his fathers, a kind of rural potentate in the midst of a metropolis.

To share the cares and sweets of sweet sovereignty, he had taken

unto himself a helpmate, one of that excellent kind, called stirring women; that is to say, she was one of those notable little housewives who are always busy when there is nothing to do. Her activity, however, took one particular direction; her whole life seemed devoted to intense knitting; whether at home or abroad, walking or sitting, her needles were constantly in motion, and it is even affirmed that by her unwearied industry she very nearly supplied her household with stockings throughout the year. This worthy couple were blessed with one daughter, who was brought up with great tenderness and care; uncommon pains had been taken with her education, so that she could stitch in every variety of way; make all kinds of pickles and preserves, and mark her own name on a sampler. The influence of her taste was seen also in the family garden, where the ornamental began to mingle with the useful; whole rows of fiery marigolds and splendid hollyhocks bordered the cabbage beds; and gigantic sunflowers lolled their broad jolly faces over the fences, seeming to ogle most affectionately the passers-by.

Thus reigned and vegetated Wolfert Webber over his paternal acres, peacefully and contentedly. Not but that, like all other sovereigns, he had his occasional cares and vexations. The growth of his native city sometimes caused him annoyance. His little territory gradually became hemmed in by streets and houses, which intercepted air and sunshine. He was now and then subjected to the irruptions of the border population that infest the streets of a metropolis; who would make midnight forays into his dominions, and carry off captive whole platoons of his noblest subjects. Vagrant swine would make a descent, too, now and then, when the gate was left open, and lay waste all before them; and mischievous urchins would decapitate the illustrious sunflowers, the glory of the garden, as they lolled their heads so fondly over the walls. Still all these were petty grievances, which might now and then ruffle the surface of his mind, as a summer breeze will ruffle the surface of a mill-pond; but they could not disturb the deep-seated quiet of his soul. He would but seize a trusty staff, that stood behind the door, issue suddenly out, and anoint the back of the aggressor, whether pig or urchin, and then return within doors, marvellously refreshed and tranquillized.

The chief cause of anxiety to honest Wolfert, however, was the growing prosperity of the city. The expenses of living doubled and trebled; but he could not double and treble the magnitude of his cabbages; and the number of competitors prevented the increase of price; thus, therefore, while every one around him grew richer, Wolfert grew poorer, and he could not, for the life of him, perceive how the evil was to be remedied.

This growing care, which increased from day to day, had its gradual effect upon our worthy burgher; insomuch, that it at length implanted two or three wrinkles in his brow; things un-

known before in the family of the Webbers; and it seemed to pinch up the corners of his cocked hat into an expression of anxiety, totally opposite to the tranquil, broad-brimmed, low-crowned beavers of his illustrious progenitors.

Perhaps even this would not have materially disturbed the serenity of his mind, had he had only himself and his wife to care for; but there was his daughter gradually growing to maturity; and all the world knows that when daughters begin to ripen no fruit nor flower requires so much looking after. I have no talent at describing female charms, else fain would I depict the progress of this little Dutch beauty. How her blue eyes grew deeper and deeper, and her cherry lips redder and redder; and how she ripened and ripened, and rounded and rounded in the opening breath of sixteen summers, until, in her seventeenth spring, she seemed ready to burst out of her bodice, like a half-blown rose-bud!

Ah! well-a-day! could I but show her as she was then, tricked out on a Sunday morning, in the hereditary finery of the old Dutch clothes-press, of which her mother had confided to her the key. The wedding-dress of her grandmother, modernised for use, with sundry ornaments, handed down as heirlooms in the family. Her pale brown hair smoothed with buttermilk in flat waving lines on each side of her fair forehead. The chain of yellow virgin gold, that encircled her neck; the little cross, that just rested at the entrance of a soft valley of happiness, as if it would sanctify the place. The—but, pooh!—it is not for an old man like me to be prosing about female beauty; suffice it to say, Amy had attained her seventeenth year. Long since had her sampler exhibited hearts in couples desperately transfixed with arrows, and true lovers' knots worked in deep-blue silk; and it was evident she began to languish for some more interesting occupation than the rearing of sunflowers or pickling of cucumbers.

At this critical period of female existence, when the heart within a damsel's bosom, like its emblem, the miniature which hangs without, is apt to be engrossed by a single image, a new visitor began to make his appearance under the roof of Wolfert Webber. This was Dirk Waldron, the only son of a poor widow, but who could boast of more fathers than any lad in the province; for his mother had had four husbands, and this only child, so that though born in her last wedlock, he might fairly claim to be the tardy fruit of a long course of cultivation. This son of four fathers, united the merits and the vigour of all his sires. If he had not had a great family before him, he seemed likely to have a great one after him; for you had only to look at the fresh bucksome youth, to see that he was formed to be the founder of a mighty race.

This youngster gradually became an intimate visitor of the family. He talked little, but he sat long. He filled the father's pipe when it was empty, gathered up the mother's knitting needle, or ball of worsted when it fell to the ground; stroked the sleek

coat of the tortoise-shell cat, and replenished the teapot for the daughter from the bright copper kettle that sung before the fire. All these quiet little offices may seem of trifling import; but when true love is translated into Low Dutch, it is in this way that it eloquently expresses itself. They were not lost upon the Webber family. The winning youngster found marvellous favour in the eyes of the mother; the tortoise-shell cat, albeit the most staid and demure of her kind, gave indubitable signs of approbation of his visits, the teakettle seemed to sing out a cheering note of welcome at his approach, and if the sly glances of the daughter might be rightly read, as she sat bridling and dimpling, and sewing by her mother's side, she was not a whit behind Dame Webber, or grimalkin, or the teakettle, in good will.

Wolfert alone saw nothing of what was going on. Profoundly wrapt up in meditation on the growth of the city and his cabbages, he sat looking in the fire, and puffing his pipe in silence. One night, however, as the gentle Amy, according to custom, lighted her lover to the outer door, and he, according to custom, took his parting salute, the smack resounded so vigorously through the long silent entry, as to startle even the dull ear of Wolfert. He was slowly roused to a new source of anxiety. It had never entered into his head that this mere child, who, as it seemed, but the other day had been climbing about his knees, and playing with dolls and baby-houses, could all at once be thinking of lovers and matrimony. He rubbed his eyes, examined into the fact, and really found that while he had been dreaming of other matters, she had actually grown to be a woman, and what was worse, had fallen in love. Here arose new cares for Wolfert. He was a kind father, but he was a prudent man. The young man was a lively, stirring lad; but then he had neither money nor land. Wolfert's ideas all ran in one channel; and he saw no alternative in case of a marriage, but to portion off the young couple with a corner of his cabbage garden, the whole of which was barely sufficient for the support of his family.

Like a prudent father, therefore, he determined to nip this passion in the bud, and forbade the youngster the house; though sorely did it go against his fatherly heart, and many a silent tear did it cause in the bright eye of his daughter. She showed herself, however, a pattern of filial piety and obedience. She never pouted and sulked; she never flew in the face of parental authority; she never flew into a passion, nor fell into hysterics, as many romantic novel-read young ladies would do. Not she, indeed! She was none such heroical rebellious trumpery, I'll warrant ye. On the contrary, she acquiesced like an obedient daughter, shut the street door in her lover's face, and if ever she did grant him an interview, it was either out of the kitchen window, or over the garden fence.

Wolfert was deeply cogitating these matters in his mind, and

his brow wrinkled with unusual care, as he wended his way one Saturday afternoon to a rural inn, about two miles from the city. It was a favourite resort of the Dutch part of the community, from being always held by a Dutch line of landlords, and retaining an air and relish of the good old times. It was a Dutch-built house, that had probably been a country-seat of some opulent burgher in the early time of the settlement. It stood near a point of land, called Corlear's Hook, which stretches out into the Sound, and against which the tide, at its flux and reflux, sets with extraordinary rapidity. The venerable and somewhat crazy mansion was distinguished from afar, by a grove of elms and sycamores that seemed to wave a hospitable invitation, while a few weeping-willows, with their dank, drooping foliage, resembling fallen waters, gave an idea of coolness, that rendered it an attractive spot during the heats of summer.

Here, therefore, as I said, resorted many of the old inhabitants of the Manahattoes, where, while some played at shuffle-board, and quoits, and nine-pins, others smoked a deliberate pipe, and talked over public affairs.

It was on a blustering autumnal afternoon that Wolfert made his visit to the inn. The grove of elms and willows was stripped of its leaves, which whirled in rustling eddies about the fields. The nine-pin alley was deserted, for the premature chilliness of the day had driven the company within doors. As it was Saturday afternoon, the habitual club was in session, composed principally of regular Dutch burghers, though mingled occasionally with persons of various character and country, as is natural in a place of such motley population.

Beside the fireplace, in a huge leather-bottomed arm-chair, sat the dictator of this little world, the venerable Rem, or as it was pronounced, Ramm Rapelye. He was a man of Walloon race, and illustrious for the antiquity of his line; his great-grandmother having been the first white child born in the province. But he was still more illustrious for his wealth and dignity: he had long filled the noble office of alderman, and was a man to whom the governor himself took off his hat. He had maintained possession of the leather-bottomed chair from time immemorial; and had gradually waxed in bulk as he sat in the seat of government, until, in the course of years, he filled its whole magnitude. His word was decisive with his subjects; for he was so rich a man, that he was never expected to support any opinion by argument. The landlord waited on him with peculiar officiousness; not that he paid better than his neighbours, but then the coin of a rich man seems always to be so much more acceptable. The landlord had ever a pleasant word and a joke to insinuate in the ear of the august Ramm. It is true Ramm never laughed, and, indeed, ever maintained a mastiff-like gravity, and even surliness of aspect; yet he now and then rewarded mine host with a token of approbation; which,

though nothing more nor less than a kind of grunt, still delighted the landlord more than a broad laugh from a poorer man.

"This will be a rough night for the money-diggers," said mine host, as a gust of wind howled round the house, and rattled at the windows.

"What! are they at their works again?" said an English half-pay captain, with one eye, who was a very frequent attendant at the inn.

"Ay, are they," said the landlord, "and well may they be. They've had luck of late. They say a great pot of money has been dug up in the fields, just behind Stuyvesant's orchard. Folks think it must have been buried there in old times, by Peter Stuyvesant, the Dutch governor."

"Fudge!" said the one-eyed man of war, as he added a small portion of water to a bottom of brandy.

"Well, you may believe it, or not, as you please," said mine host, somewhat nettled; "but everybody knows that the old governor buried a great deal of his money at the time of the Dutch troubles, when the English red-coats seized on the province. They say, too, the old gentleman walks; ay, and in the very same dress that he wears in the picture that hangs up in the family house."

"Fudge!" said the half-pay officer.

"Fudge, if you please!—But didn't Corney Van Zandt see him at midnight, stalking about in the meadow with his wooden leg, and a drawn sword in his hand, that flashed like fire? And what can he be walking for, but because people have been troubling the place where he buried his money in old times?"

Here the landlord was interrupted by several guttural sounds from Ramm Rapelye, betokening that he was labouring with the unusual production of an idea. As he was too great a man to be slighted by a prudent publican, mine host respectfully paused until he should deliver himself. The corpulent frame of this mighty burgher now gave all the symptoms of a volcanic mountain on the point of an eruption. First, there was a certain heaving of the abdomen, not unlike an earthquake; then was emitted a cloud of tobacco-smoke from that crater, his mouth; then there was a kind of rattle in the throat, as if the idea were working its way up through a region of phlegm; then there were several disjointed members of a sentence thrown out, ending in a cough; at length his voice forced its way in the slow, but absolute tone of a man who feels the weight of his purse, if not of his ideas; every portion of his speech being marked by a testy puff of tobacco-smoke.

"Who talks of old Peter Stuyvesant's walking?—puff—Have people no respect for persons?—puff—puff—Peter Stuyvesant knew better what to do with his money than to bury it—puff—I know the Stuyvesant family—puff—every one of them—puff—not a more respectable family in the province—puff—old standards

—puff—warm householders—puff—none of your upstarts—puff—puff—puff.—Don't talk to me of Peter Stuyvesant's walking—puff—puff—puff—puff."

Here the redoubtable Ramm contracted his brow, clasped up his mouth till it wrinkled at each corner, and redoubled his smoking with such vehemence, that the cloudy volumes soon wreathed round his head, as the smoke envelopes the awful summit of Mount Etna.

A general silence followed the sudden rebuke of this very rich man. The subject, however, was too interesting to be readily abandoned. The conversation soon broke forth again from the lips of Peechy Prauw Van Hook, the chronicler of the club, one of those prosing, narrative old men who seem to be troubled with an incontinence of words, as they grow old.

Peechy could, at any time, tell as many stories in an evening as his hearers could digest in a month. He now resumed the conversation, by affirming that, to his knowledge, money had at different times been digged up in various parts of the island. The lucky persons who had discovered them had always dreamt of them three times beforehand, and what was worthy of remark, those treasures had never been found but by some descendant of the good old Dutch families, which clearly proved that they had been buried by Dutchmen in the olden time.

"Fiddlestick with your Dutchmen!" cried the half-pay officer. "The Dutch had nothing to do with them. They were all buried by Kidd the pirate, and his crew."

Here a key-note was touched that roused the whole company. The name of Captain Kidd was like a talisman in those times, and was associated with a thousand marvellous stories.

The half-pay officer took the lead, and in his narrations fathered upon Kidd all the plunderings and exploits of Morgan, Blackbeard, and the whole list of bloody buccaneers.

The officer was a man of great weight among the peaceable members of the club, by reason of his warlike character and gunpowder tales. All his golden stories of Kidd, however, and the booty he had buried, were obstinately rivalled by the tales of Peechy Prauw, who, rather than suffer his Dutch progenitors to be eclipsed by a foreign freebooter, enriched every field and shore in the neighbourhood with the hidden wealth of Peter Stuyvesant and his contemporaries.

Not a word of this conversation was lost upon Wolfert Webber. He returned pensively home, full of magnificent ideas. The soil of his native island seemed to be turned into gold dust; and every field to teem with treasure. His head almost reeled at the thought how often he must have heedlessly rambled over places where countless sums lay, scarcely covered by the turf beneath his feet. His mind was in an uproar with this whirl of new ideas. As he came in sight of the venerable mansion of his forefathers, and the

little realm where the Webbers had so long and so contentedly flourished, his gorge rose at the narrowness of his destiny.

"Unlucky Wolfert!" exclaimed he; "others can go to bed and dream themselves into whole mines of wealth; they have but to seize a spade in the morning, and turn up doubloons like potatoes; but thou must dream of hardships, and rise to poverty—must dig thy field from year's end to year's end, and yet raise nothing but cabbages!"

Wolfert Webber went to bed with a heavy heart, and it was long before the golden visions that disturbed his brain permitted him to sink into repose. The same visions, however, extended into his sleeping thoughts, and assumed a more definite form. He dreamt that he had discovered an immense treasure in the centre of his garden. At every stroke of the spade he laid bare a golden ingot; diamond crosses sparkled out of the dust; bags of money turned up their bellies, corpulent with pieces-of-eight, or venerable doubloons; and chests, wedged close with moidores, ducats, and pistareens, yawned before his ravished eyes, and vomited forth their glittering contents.

Wolfert awoke a poorer man than ever. He had no heart to go about his daily concerns, which appeared so paltry and profitless; but sat all day long in the chimney-corner, picturing to himself ingots and heaps of gold in the fire. The next night his dream was repeated. He was again in his garden, digging, and laying open stores of hidden wealth. There was something very singular in this repetition. He passed another day of reverie, and though it was cleaning-day, and the house, as usual in Dutch households, completely topsy-turvy, yet he sat unmoved amidst the general uproar.

The third night he went to bed with a palpitating heart. He put on his red night-cap wrong side outwards, for good luck. It was deep midnight before his anxious mind could settle itself into sleep. Again the golden dream was repeated, and again he saw his garden teeming with ingots and money bags.

Wolfert rose the next morning in complete bewilderment. A dream three times repeated was never known to lie; and if so, his fortune was made.

In his agitation he put on his waistcoat with the hind part before, and this was a corroboration of good luck. He no longer doubted that a huge store of money lay buried somewhere in his cabbage field, coyly waiting to be sought for: and he repined at having so long been scratching about the surface of the soil instead of digging to the centre.

He took his seat at the breakfast table full of these speculations; asked his daughter to put a lump of gold into his tea, and on handing his wife a plate of slap-jacks, begged her to help herself to a doubloon.

His grand care now was how to secure this immense treasure

without its being known. Instead of working regularly in his grounds in the daytime, he now stole from his bed at night, and with spade and pickaxe, went to work to rip up and dig about his paternal acres, from one end to the other. In a little time the whole garden, which had presented such a goodly and regular appearance, with its phalanx of cabbages, like a vegetable army in battle array, was reduced to a scene of devastation! while the relentless Wolfert, with night-cap on head, and lantern and spade in hand, stalked through the slaughtered ranks, the destroying angel of his own vegetable world.

Every morning bore testimony to the ravages of the preceding night in cabbages of all ages and conditions, from the tender sprout to the full-grown head, piteously rooted from their quiet beds like worthless weeds, and left to wither in the sunshine. In vain Wolfert's wife remonstrated; in vain his darling daughter wept over the destruction of some favourite marigold. "Thou shalt have gold of another guess sort," he would cry, chucking her under the chin; "thou shalt have a string of crooked ducats for thy wedding necklace, my child." His family began really to fear that the poor man's wits were diseased. He muttered in his sleep at night about mines of wealth, about pearls and diamonds and bars of gold. In the daytime he was moody and abstracted, and walked about as if in a trance. Dame Webber held frequent councils with all the old women of the neighbourhood; scarce an hour in the day but a knot of them might be seen wagging their white caps together round her door, while the poor woman made some piteous recital. The daughter too was fain to seek for more frequent consolation from the stolen interviews of her favoured swain Dirk Waldron. The delectable little Dutch songs with which she used to dulcify the house grew less and less frequent, and she would forget her sewing and look wistfully in her father's face, as he sat pondering by the fireside. Wolfert caught her eye one day fixed on him thus anxiously, and for a moment was roused from his golden reveries.—"Cheer up, my girl," said he exultingly, "why dost thou droop?—thou shalt hold up thy head one day with the Brinckerhoffs, and the Schermerhorns, the Van Hornes, and the Van Dams.—By Saint Nicholas, but the patroon himself shall be glad to get thee for his son!"

Amy shook her head at this vainglorious boast, and was more than ever in doubt of the soundness of the good man's intellect.

In the meantime Wolfert went on digging and digging; but the field was extensive, and as his dream had indicated no precise spot, he had to dig at random. The winter set in before one-tenth of the scene of promise had been explored.

The ground became frozen hard, and the nights too cold for the labours of the spade.

No sooner, however, did the returning warmth of spring loosen the soil, and the small frogs begin to pipe in the meadows, but

Wolfert resumed his labours with renovated zeal. Still, however, the hours of industry were reversed.

Instead of working cheerily all day, planting and setting out his vegetables, he remained thoughtfully idle, until the shades of night summoned him to his secret labours. In this way he continued to dig from night to night, and week to week, and month to month, but not a stiver did he find. On the contrary, the more he digged, the poorer he grew. The rich soil of his garden was digged away, and the sand and gravel from beneath were thrown to the surface, until the whole field presented an aspect of sandy barrenness.

In the meantime the seasons gradually rolled on. The little frogs which had piped in the meadows in early spring, croaked as bull-frogs during the summer heats, and then sank into silence. The peach-tree budded, blossomed, and bore its fruit. The swallows and martins came, twittered about the roof, built their nests, reared their young, held their congress along the eaves, and then winged their flight in search of another spring. The caterpillar spun its winding-sheet, dangled it from the great button-wood tree before the house; turned into a moth, fluttered with the last sunshine of summer, and disappeared; and finally the leaves of the button-wood tree turned yellow, then brown, then rustled one by one to the ground, and whirling about in little eddies of wind and dust, whispered that winter was at hand.

Wolfert gradually awoke from his dream of wealth as the year declined. He had reared no crop for the supply of his household during the sterility of winter. The season was long and severe, and for the first time the family was really straitened in its comforts. By degrees a revulsion of thought took place in Wolfert's mind, common to those whose golden dreams have been disturbed by pinching realities. The idea gradually stole upon him that he should come to want. He already considered himself one of the most unfortunate men in the province, having lost such an incalculable amount of undiscovered treasure, and now, when thousands of pounds had eluded his search, to be perplexed for shillings and pence was cruel in the extreme.

Haggard care gathered about his brow; he went about with a money-seeking air, his eyes bent downwards into the dust, and carrying his hands in his pockets, as men are apt to do when they have nothing else to put into them. He could not even pass the city almshouse without giving it a rueful glance, as if destined to be his future abode.

The strangeness of his conduct and of his looks occasioned much speculation and remark. For a long time he was suspected of being crazy, and then every body pitied him; at length it began to be suspected that he was poor, and then every body avoided him.

The rich old burghers of his acquaintance met him outside of the door when he called, entertained him hospitably on the

threshold, pressed him warmly by the hand at parting, shook their heads as he walked away, with the kind-hearted expression of "poor Wolfert," and turned a corner nimbly, if by chance they saw him approaching as they walked the streets. Even the barber and cobbler of the neighbourhood, and a tattered tailor in an alley hard by, three of the poorest and merriest rogues in the world, eyed him with that abundant sympathy which usually attends a lack of means; and there is not a doubt but their pockets would have been at his command, only that they happened to be empty.

Thus every body deserted the Webber mansion, as if poverty were contagious, like the plague; every body but honest Dirk Waldron, who still kept up his stolen visits to the daughter, and indeed seemed to wax more affectionate as the fortunes of his mistress were in the wane.

Many months had elapsed since Wolfert had frequented his old resort, the rural inn. He was taking a long lonely walk one Saturday afternoon, musing over his wants and disppointments, when his feet took instinctively their wonted direction, and on awaking out of a reverie, he found himself before the door of the inn. For some moments he hesitated whether to enter, but his heart yearned for companionship; and where can a ruined man find better companionship than at a tavern, where there is neither sober example nor sober advice to put him out of countenance?

Wolfert found several of the old frequenters of the inn at their usual posts, and seated in their usual places; but one was missing, the great Ramm Rapelye, who for many years had filled the leather-bottomed chair of state. His place was supplied by a stranger, who seemed, however, completely at home in the chair and the tavern. He was rather under size, but deep chested, square, and muscular. His broad shoulders, double joints, and bow knees, gave tokens of prodigious strength. His face was dark and weather-beaten; a deep scar, as if from the slash of a cutlass, had almost divided his nose, and made a gash in his upper lip through which his teeth shone like a bull-dog's. A mop of iron-gray hair gave a grisly finish to his hard-favoured visage. His dress was of an amphibious character. He wore an old hat edged with tarnished lace, and cocked in martial style, on one side of his head; a rusty blue military coat with brass buttons, and a wide pair of short petticoat trowsers, or rather breeches, for they were gathered up at the knees. He ordered every body about him with an authoritative air; talked in a brattling voice that sounded like the crackling of thorns under a pot; d——d the landlord and servants with perfect impunity, and was waited upon with greater obsequiousness than had ever been shown to the mighty Ramm himself.

Wolfert's curiosity was awakened to know who and what was this stranger, who had thus usurped absolute sway in this ancient domain. Peechy Prauw took him aside, into a remote corner of

the hall, and there, in an under voice, and with great caution, imparted to him all that he knew on the subject. The inn had been aroused several months before, on a dark stormy night, by repeated long shouts, that seemed like the howlings of a wolf. They came from the water-side; and at length were distinguished to be hailing the house in the seafaring manner, "House-a-hoy!" The landlord turned out with his head waiter, tapster, hostler, and errand-boy—that is to say, with his old negro Cuff. On approaching the place whence the voice proceeded, they found this amphibious-looking personage at the water's edge, quite alone, and seated on a great oaken sea-chest. How he came there, whether he had been set on shore from some boat, or had floated to land on his chest, nobody could tell, for he did not seem disposed to answer questions; and there was something in his looks and manners that put a stop to all questioning. Suffice it to say, he took possession of a corner room of the inn, to which his chest was removed with great difficulty. Here he had remained ever since, keeping about the inn and its vicinity. Sometimes, it is true, he disappeared for one, two, or three days at a time, going and returning without giving any notice or account of his movements. He always appeared to have plenty of money, though often of a very strange outlandish coinage; and he regularly paid his bill every evening before turning in.

He had fitted up his room to his own fancy, having slung a hammock from the ceiling instead of a bed, and decorated the walls with rusty pistols and cutlasses of foreign workmanship. A great part of his time was passed in this room, seated by the window, which commanded a wide view of the Sound, a short old-fashioned pipe in his mouth, a glass of rum toddy at his elbow, and a pocket telescope in his hand, with which he reconnoitred every boat that moved upon the water. Large square-rigged vessels seemed to excite but little attention; but the moment he descried any thing with a shoulder-of-mutton sail, or that a barge, or yawl, or jolly-boat hove in sight, up went the telescope, and he examined it with the most scrupulous attention.

All this might have passed without much notice, for in those times the province was so much the resort of adventurers of all characters and climes, that any oddity in dress or behaviour attracted but small attention. In a little while, however, this strange sea-monster, thus strangely cast upon dry land, began to encroach upon the long-established customs and customers of the place, and to interfere in a dictatorial manner in the affairs of the nine-pin alley and the bar-room, until in the end he usurped an absolute command over the whole inn. It was all in vain to attempt to withstand his authority. He was not exactly quarrelsome, but boisterous and peremptory, like one accustomed to tyrannize on a quarter deck; and there was a dare-devil air about every thing he said and did, that inspired a wariness in all bystanders. Even the

half-pay officer, so long the hero of the club, was soon silenced by him; and the quiet burghers stared with wonder at seeing their inflammable man of war so readily and quietly extinguished.

And then the tales that he would tell were enough to make a peaceable man's hair stand on end. There was not a sea-fight, nor marauding nor freebooting adventure that had happened within the last twenty years, but he seemed perfectly versed in it. He delighted to talk of the exploits of the buccaneers in the West Indies and on the Spanish Main. How his eyes would glisten as he described the waylaying of treasure ships, the desperate fights, yard-arm and yard-arm—broadside and broadside—the boarding and capturing of huge Spanish galleons! With what chuckling relish would be describe the descent upon some rich Spanish colony; the rifling of a church; the sacking of a convent! You would have thought you heard some gormandizer dilating upon the roasting of a savoury goose at Michaelmas as he described the roasting of some Spanish Don to make him discover his treasure—a detail given with a minuteness that made every rich old burgher present turn uncomfortably in his chair. All this would be told with infinite glee, as if he considered it an excellent joke; and then he would give such a tyrannical leer in the face of his next neighbour, that the poor man would be fain to laugh out of sheer faint-heartedness. If any one, however, pretended to contradict him in any of his stories he was on fire in an instant. His very cocked hat assumed a momentary fierceness, and seemed to resent the contradiction. "How the devil should you know as well as I?—I tell you it was as I say;" and he would at the same time let slip a broadside of thundering oaths and tremendous sea-phrases, such as had never been heard before within these peaceful walls.

Indeed, the worthy burghers began to surmise that he knew more of those stories than mere hearsay. Day after day their conjectures concerning him grew more and more wild and fearful. The strangeness of his arrival, the strangeness of his manners, the mystery that surrounded him, all made him something incomprehensible in their eyes. He was a kind of monster of the deep to them—he was a merman—he was a behemoth—he was a leviathan—in short, they knew not what he was.

The domineering spirit of this boisterous sea-urchin at length grew quite intolerable. He was no respecter of persons; he contradicted the richest burghers without hesitation; he took possession of the sacred elbow-chair, which, time out of mind, had been the seat of sovereignty of the illustrious Ramm Rapelye. Nay, he even went so far in one of his rough jocular moods, as to slap that mighty burgher on the back, drink his toddy, and wink in his face, a thing scarcely to be believed. From this time Ramm Rapelye appeared no more at the inn; his example was followed by several of the most eminent customers, who were too rich to

tolerate being bullied out of their opinions, or being obliged to laugh at another man's jokes. The landlord was almost in despair; but he knew not how to get rid of this sea-monster and his sea-chest, who seemed both to have grown like fixtures, or excrescences, on his establishment.

Such was the account whispered cautiously in Wolfert's ear, by the narrator, Peechy Prauw, as he held him by the button in a corner of the hall, casting a wary glance now and then towards the door of the bar-room, lest he should be overheard by the terrible hero of his tale.

Wolfert took his seat in a remote part of the room in silence; impressed with profound awe of this unknown, so versed in free-booting history. It was to him a wonderful instance of the revolutions of mighty empires, to find the venerable Ramm Rapelye thus ousted from the throne, and a rugged tarpawling dictating from his elbow-chair, hectoring the patriarchs, and filling this tranquil little realm with brawl and bravado.

The stranger was on this evening in a more than usually communicative mood, and was narrating a number of astounding stories of plunderings and burnings on the high seas. He dwelt upon them with peculiar relish, heightening the frightful particulars in proportion to their effect on his peaceful auditors. He gave a swaggering detail of the capture of a Spanish merchantman. She was lying becalmed during a long summer's day, just off from an island, which was one of the lurking places of the pirates. They had reconnoitered her with their spy-glasses from the shore, and ascertained her character and force. At night a picked crew of daring fellows set off for her in a whaleboat. They approached with muffled oars, as she lay rocking idly with the undulations of the sea, and her sails flapping against the masts. They were close under her stern before the guard on deck was aware of their approach. The alarm was given; the pirates threw hand-grenades on deck, and sprang up the main-chains sword in hand.

The crew flew to arms, but in great confusion; some were shot down, others took refuge in the tops; others were driven overboard and drowned, while others fought hand to hand from the main-deck to the quarter-deck, disputing gallantly every inch of ground. There were three Spanish gentlemen on board with their ladies, who made the most desperate resistance. They defended the companion-way, cut down several of their assailants, and fought like very devils, for they were maddened by the shrieks of the ladies from the cabin. One of the Dons was old, and soon dispatched. The other two kept their ground vigorously, even though the captain of the pirates was among their assailants. Just then there was a shout of victory from the main-deck. "The ship is ours!" cried the pirates.

One of the Dons immediately dropped his sword and surrendered; the other, who was a hot-headed youngster, and just mar-

ried, gave the captain a slash in the face that laid all open. The captain just made out to articulate the words, "No quarter!"

"And what did they do with their prisoners?" said Peechy Prauw, eagerly.

"Threw them all overboard!" was the answer. A dead pause followed the reply. Peechy Prauw sunk quietly back, like a man who had unwarily stolen upon the lair of a sleeping lion. The honest burghers cast fearful glances at the deep scar slashed across the visage of the stranger, and moved their chairs a little farther off. The seaman, however, smoked on without moving a muscle, as though he either did not perceive or did not regard the unfavourable effect he had produced upon his hearers.

The half-pay officer was the first to break the silence; for he was continually tempted to make ineffectual head against the tyrant of the seas, and to regain his lost consequence in the eyes of his ancient companions. He now tried to match the gunpowder tales of the stranger, by others equally tremendous. Kidd, as usual, was his hero, concerning whom he seemed to have picked up many of the floating traditions of the province. The seaman had always evinced a settled pique against the one-eyed warrior. On this occasion he listened with peculiar impatience. He sat with one arm akimbo, the other elbow on a table, the hand holding on to the small pipe he was pettishly puffing; his legs crossed; drumming with one foot on the ground, and casting every now and then the side-glance of a basilisk at the prosing captain. At length the latter spoke of Kidd's having ascended the Hudson, with some of his crew, to land his plunder in secrecy.

"Kidd up the Hudson!" burst forth the seaman, with a tremendous oath—"Kidd never was up the Hudson!"

"I tell you he was," said the other. "Aye, and they say he buried a quantity of treasure on the little flat that runs out into the river, called the Devil's Dans Kammer.

"The Devil's Dans Kammer in your teeth!" cried the seaman. "I tell you Kidd was never up the Hudson. What a plague do you know of Kidd and his haunts?"

"What do I know?" echoed the half-pay officer. "Why, I was in London at the time of his trial; aye, and I had the pleasure of seeing him hanged at Execution Dock."

"Then, sir, let me tell you that you saw as pretty a fellow hanged as ever trod shoe-leather. Aye!" putting his face nearer to that of the officer, "and there was many a land-lubber looked on that might much better have swung in his stead."

The half-pay officer was silenced; but the indignation thus pent up in his bosom glowed with intense vehemence in his single eye, which kindled like a coal.

Peechy Prauw, who never could remain silent, observed that the gentleman certainly was in the right. Kidd never did bury money up the Hudson, nor indeed in any of those parts, though

many affirmed such to be the fact. It was Bradish and others of the buccaneers who had buried money; some said in Turtle Bay, others on Long Island, others in the neighbourhood of Hell-gate.

Indeed, added he, I recollect an adventure of Sam, the negro fisherman, many years ago, which some think had something to do with the buccaneers. As we are all friends here, and as it will go no farther, I'll tell it to you.

"Upon a dark night many years ago, as Black Sam was returning from fishing in Hell-gate——"

Here the story was nipped in the bud by a sudden movement from the unknown, who laying his iron fist on the table, knuckles downward, with a quiet force that indented the very boards, and looking grimly over his shoulder, with the grin of an angry bear —"Heark'ee, neighbour," said he, with significant nodding of the head, "you'd better let the buccaneers and their money alone—they're not for old men and old women to meddle with. They fought hard for their money; they gave body and soul for it: and wherever it lies buried, depend upon it he must have a tug with the devil who gets it!"

This sudden explosion was succeeded by a blank silence throughout the room. Peechy Prauw shrunk within himself, and even the one-eyed officer turned pale. Wolfert, who from a dark corner of the room had listened with intense eagerness to all this talk about buried treasure, looked with mingled awe and reverence at this bold buccaneer, for such he really suspected him to be. There was a chinking of gold and a sparkling of jewels in all his stories about the Spanish Main that gave a value to every period; and Wolfert would have given any thing for the rummaging of the ponderous sea-chest, which his imagination crammed full of golden chalices, crucifixes, and jolly round bags of doubloons.

The dead stillness that had fallen upon the company was at length interrupted by the stranger, who pulled out a prodigious watch of curious and ancient workmanship, and which in Wolfert's eyes had a decidedly Spanish look. On touching a spring it struck ten o'clock; upon which the sailor called for his reckoning, and having paid it out of a handful of outlandish coin, he drank off the remainder of his beverage, and without taking leave of any one, rolled out of the room, muttering to himself, as he stamped up stairs to his chamber.

It was some time before the company could recover from the silence into which they had been thrown. The very footsteps of the stranger, which were heard now and then as he traversed his chamber, inspired awe.

Still the conversation in which they had been engaged was too interesting not to be resumed. A heavy thundergust had gathered up unnoticed while they were lost in talk, and the torrents of rain that fell forbade all thoughts of setting off for home until the storm should subside. They drew nearer together, therefore, and

entreated the worthy Peechy Prauw to continue the tale which had been so discourteously interrupted. He readily complied, whispering, however, in a tone scarcely above his breath, and drowned occasionally by the rolling of the thunder; and he would pause every now and then, and listen with evident awe, as he heard the heavy footsteps of the stranger pacing overhead.

The following is the purport of his story.

THE ADVENTURE OF THE BLACK FISHERMAN.

Everybody knows Black Sam, the old negro fisherman, or, as he is commonly called, Mud Sam, who has fished about the Sound for the last half century. It is now many years since Sam, who was then as active a young negro as any in the province, and worked on the farm of Killian Suydam on Long Island, having finished his day's work at an early hour, was fishing, one still summer evening, just about the neighbourhood of Hell-gate.

He was in a light skiff, and being well acquainted with the currents and eddies, had shifted his station according to the shifting of the tide, from the Hen and Chickens to the Hog's Back, from the Hog's Back to the Pot, and from the Pot to the Frying-Pan; but in the eagerness of his sport he did not see that the tide was rapidly ebbing, until the roaring of the whirlpools and eddies warned him of his danger; and he had some difficulty in shooting his skiff from among the rocks and breakers, and getting to the point of Blackwell's Island. Here he cast anchor for some time, waiting the turn of the tide to enable him to return homewards. As the night set in, it grew blustering and gusty. Dark clouds came bundling up in the west; and now and then a growl of thunder or a flash of lightning told that a summer storm was at hand. Sam pulled over, therefore, under the lee of Manhattan Island, and coasting along, came to a snug nook, just under a steep beetling rock, where he fastened his skiff to the root of a tree that shot out from a cleft, and spread its broad branches like a canopy over the water. The gust came scouring along; the wind threw up the river in white surges; the rain rattled among the leaves; the thunder bellowed worse than that which is now bellowing; the lightning seemed to lick up the surges of the stream; but Sam, snugly sheltered under rock and tree, lay crouching in his skiff, rocking upon the billows until he fell asleep. When he woke all was quiet. The gust had passed away, and only now and then a faint gleam of lightning in the east showed which way it had gone. The night was dark and moonless; and from the state of the tide Sam concluded it was near midnight. He was on the point of making loose his skiff to return homewards, when he saw a light gleaming along the water from a distance, which seemed rapidly approaching. As it drew near he perceived it came from a lantern in the bow of a boat gliding along under

shadow of the land. It pulled up in a small cove, close to where he was. A man jumped on shore, and searching about with the lantern, exclaimed, "This is the place—here's the iron ring." The boat was then made fast, and the man, returning on board, assisted his comrades in conveying something heavy on shore. As the light gleamed among them, Sam saw that they were five stout desperate-looking fellows, in red woollen caps, with a leader in a three-cornered hat, and that some of them were armed with dirks, or long knives, and pistols. They talked low to one another, and occasionally in some outlandish tongue, which he could not understand.

On landing, they made their way among the bushes, taking turns to relieve each other in lugging their burden up the rocky bank. Sam's curiosity was now fully aroused; so leaving his skiff he clambered silently up a ridge that overlooked their path. They had stopped to rest for a moment, and the leader was looking about among the bushes with his lantern. "Have you brought the spades?" said one. "They are here," replied another, who had them on his shoulder. "We must dig deep, where there will be no risk of discovery," said a third.

A cold chill ran through Sam's veins. He fancied he saw before him a gang of murderers, about to bury their victim. His knees smote together. In his agitation he shook the branch of a tree with which he was supporting himself as he looked over the edge of the cliff.

"What's that?" cried one of the gang. "Some one stirs among the bushes!"

The lantern was held up in the direction of the noise. One of the red-caps cocked a pistol, and pointed it towards the very place where Sam was standing. He stood motionless, breathless; expecting the next moment to be his last. Fortunately his dingy complexion was in his favour, and made no glare among the leaves.

"'Tis no one," said the man with the lantern. "What a plague! you would not fire off your pistol and alarm the country!"

"The pistol was uncocked; the burden was resumed, and the party slowly toiled along the bank. Sam watched them as they went; the light sending back fitful gleams through the dripping bushes, and it was not till they were fairly out of sight that he ventured to draw breath freely. He now thought of getting back to his boat, and making his escape out of the reach of such dangerous neighbours; but curiosity was all-powerful. He hesitated and lingered and listened. By and by he heard the strokes of spades. "They are digging the grave!" said he to himself; and the cold sweat started upon his forehead. Every stroke of a spade, as it sounded through the silent groves, went to his heart; it was evident there was as little noise made as possible; everything had an air of terrible mystery and secresy. Sam had a great relish for the horrible,—a tale of murder was a treat for him; and he

was a constant attendant at executions. He could not resist an impulse, in spite of every danger, to steal nearer to the scene of mystery, and overlook the midnight fellows at their work. He crawled along cautiously, therefore, inch by inch; stepping with the utmost care among the dry leaves, lest their rustling should betray him. He came at length to where a steep rock intervened between him and the gang; for he saw the light of their lantern shining up against the branches of the trees on the other side. Sam slowly and silently clambered up the surface of the rock, and raising his head above its naked edge, beheld the villains immediately below him, and so near, that though he dreaded discovery, he dared not withdraw lest the least movement should be heard. In this way he remained, with his round black face peering above the edge of the rock, like the sun just emerging above the edge of the horizon, or the round-cheeked moon on the dial of a clock.

The red-caps had nearly finished their work; the grave was filled up, and they were carefully replacing the turf. This done, they scattered dry leaves over the place. "And now," said the leader, "I defy the devil himself to find it out."

"The murderers!" exclaimed Sam, involuntarily.

The whole gang started, and looking up beheld the round black head of Sam just above them. His white eyes strained half out of their orbits; his white teeth chattering, and his whole visage shining with cold perspiration.

"We're discovered!" cried one.

"Down with him!" cried another.

Sam heard the cocking of a pistol, but did not pause for the report. He scrambled over rock and stone, through brush and brier; rolled down banks like a hedge-hog; scrambled up others like a catamount. In every direction he heard some one or other of the gang hemming him in. At length he reached the rocky ridge along the river; one of the red-caps was hard behind him. A steep rock like a wall rose directly in his way; it seemed to cut off all retreat, when fortunately he espied the strong cord-like branch of a grape-vine reaching half way down it. He sprang at it with the force of a desperate man, seized it with both hands, and being young and agile, succeeded in swinging himself to the summit of the cliff. Here he stood in full relief against the sky, when the red-cap cocked his pistol and fired. The ball whistled by Sam's head. With the lucky thought of a man in an emergency, he uttered a yell, fell to the ground, and detached at the same time a fragment of the rock, which tumbled with a loud splash into the river.

"I've done his business," said the red-cap to one or two of his comrades as they arrived panting. "He'll tell no tales, except to the fishes in the river.

His pursuers now turned to meet their companions. Sam

sliding silently down the surface of the rock, let himself quietly into his skiff, cast loose the fastening, and abandoned himself to the rapid current, which in that place runs like a mill-stream, and soon swept him off from the neighbourhood. It was not, however, until he had drifted a great distance that he ventured to ply his oars; when he made his skiff dart like an arrow through the strait of Hell-gate, never heeding the danger of Pot, Frying-Pan, nor Hog's Back itself: nor did he feel himself thoroughly secure until safely nestled in bed in the cockloft of the ancient farm-house of the Suydams.

Here the worthy Peechy Prauw paused to take his breath, and to take a sip of the gossip tankard that stood at his elbow. His auditors remained with open mouths and outstretched necks, gaping like a nest of swallows for an additional mouthful.

"And is that all?" exclaimed the half-pay officer.

"That's all that belongs to the story," said Peechy Prauw.

"And did Sam never find out what was buried by the red-caps?" said Wolfert, eagerly, whose mind was haunted by nothing but ingots and doubloons.

"Not that I know of," said Peechy; "he had no time to spare from his work; and, to tell the truth, he did not like to run the risk of another race among the rocks. Besides, how should he recollect the spot where the grave had been digged? every thing would look so different by daylight. And then, where was the use of looking for a dead body, when there was no chance of hanging the murderers?"

"Aye, but are you sure that it was a dead body they buried?" said Wolfert.

"To be sure," cried Peechy Prauw, exultingly. "Does it not haunt in the neighbourhood to this very day?"

"Haunts!" exclaimed several of the party, opening their eyes still wider, and edging their chairs still closer.

"Aye, haunts," repeated Peechy; "have none of you heard of father Red-cap, who haunts the old burnt farm-house in the woods, on the borders of the Sound, near Hell-gate?"

"Oh, to be sure, I've heard tell of something of the kind, but then I took it for some old wives' fable."

"Old wives' fable or not," said Peechy Prauw, "that farm-house stands hard by the very spot. It's been unoccupied time out of mind, and stands in a lonely part of the coast; but those who fish in the neighbourhood have often heard strange noises there; and lights have been seen about the wood at night: and an old fellow in a red cap has been seen at the windows more than once, which people take to be the ghost of the body buried there. Once upon a time three soldiers took shelter in the building for the night, and rummaged it from top to bottom, when they found old father Red-cap astride of a cider-barrel in the cellar, with a jug in one hand and a goblet in the other. He offered them a drink out

of his goblet, but just as one of the soldiers was putting it to his mouth—whew!—a flash of fire blazed through the cellar, blinded every mother's son of them for several minutes, and when they recovered their eye-sight, jug, goblet, and Red-cap had vanished, and nothing but the empty cider-barrel remained."

Here the half-pay officer, who was growing very muzzy and sleepy, and nodding over his liquor, with half-extinguished eye, suddenly gleamed up like an expiring rushlight.

"That's all fudge!" said he, as Peechy finished his last story.

"Well, I don't vouch for the truth of it, myself," said Peechy Prauw, "though all the world knows that there's something strange about that house and grounds; but as to the story of Mud Sam, I believe it just as well as if it had happened to myself."

The deep interest taken in this conversation by the company had made them unconscious of the uproar abroad among the elements, when suddenly they were electrified by a tremendous clap of thunder. A lumbering crash followed instantaneously, shaking the building to its very foundation. All started from their seats, imagining it the shock of an earthquake, or that old father Red-cap was coming among them in all his terrors. They listened for a moment, but only heard the rain pelting against the windows, and the wind howling among the trees. The explosion was soon explained by the apparition of an old negro's bald head thrust in at the door, his white goggle eyes contrasting with his jetty poll, which was wet with rain, and shone like a bottle. In a jargon but half intelligible, he announced that the kitchen chimney had been struck with lightning.

A sullen pause of the storm, which now rose and sunk in gusts, produced a momentary stillness. In this interval the report of a musket was heard, and a long shout, almost like a yell, resounded from the shores. Every one crowded to the window; another musket-shot was heard, and another long shout, mingled wildly with a rising blast of wind. It seemed as if the cry came up from the bosom of the waters; for though incessant flashes of lightning spread a light about the shore, no one was to be seen.

Suddenly the window of the room overhead was opened, and a loud halloo uttered by the mysterious stranger. Several hailings passed from one party to the other, but in a language which none of the company in the bar-room could understand; and presently they heard the window closed, and a great noise overhead, as if all the furniture were pulled and hauled about the room. The negro servant was summoned, and shortly afterwards was seen assisting the veteran to lug the ponderous sea-chest down stairs.

The landlord was in amazement. "What, you are not going on the water in such a storm?"

"Storm!" said the other, scornfully, "do you call such a sputter of weather a storm?"

"You'll get drenched to the skin—You'll catch your death!" said Peechy Prauw, affectionately.

"Thunder and lightning!" exclaimed the merman, "don't preach about weather to a man that has cruised in whirlwinds and tornadoes."

The obsequious Peechy was again struck dumb. The voice from the water was heard once more in a tone of impatience; the bystanders stared with redoubled awe at this man of storms, who seemed to have come up out of the deep, and to be summoned back to it again. As, with the assistance of the negro, he slowly bore his ponderous sea-chest towards the shore, they eyed it with a superstitious feeling; half doubting whether he were not really about to embark upon it and launch forth upon the wild waves. They followed him at a distance with a lantern.

"Dowse the light!" roared the hoarse voice from the water. "No one wants lights here!"

"Thunder and lightning!" exclaimed the veteran, turning short upon them; "back to the house with you!"

Wolfert and his companions shrunk back in dismay. Still their curiosity would not allow them entirely to withdraw. A long sheet of lightning now flickered across the waves, and discovered a boat, filled with men, just under a rocky point, rising and sinking with the heaving surges, and swashing the water at every heave. It was with difficulty held to the rocks by a boat-hook, for the current rushed furiously round the point. The veteran hoisted one end of the lumbering sea-chest on the gunwale of the boat, and seized the handle at the other end to lift it in, when the motion propelled the boat from the shore; the chest slipped off from the gunwale, and, sinking into the waves, pulled the veteran headlong after it. A loud shriek was uttered by all on shore, and a volley of execrations by those on board; but boat and man were hurried away by the rushing swiftness of the tide. A pitchy darkness succeeded; Wolfert Webber indeed fancied that he distinguished a cry for help, and that he beheld the drowning man beckoning for assistance; but when the lightning again gleamed along the water, all was void; neither man nor boat was to be seen; nothing but the dashing and weltering of the waves as they hurried past.

The company returned to the tavern to await the subsiding of the storm. They resumed their seats, and gazed on each other with dismay. The whole transaction had not occupied five minutes, and not a dozen words had been spoken. When they looked at the oaken chair, they could scarcely realize the fact, that the strange being who had so lately tenanted it, full of life and Herculean vigour, should already be a corpse. There was the very glass he had just drank from; there lay the ashes from the pipe which he had smoked, as it were, with his last breath. As the worthy burghers pondered on these things, they felt a terrible

conviction of the uncertainty of existence, and each felt as if the ground on which he stood was rendered less stable by this awful example.

As, however, the most of the company were possessed of that valuable philosophy which enables a man to bear up with fortitude against the misfortunes of his neighbours, they soon managed to console themselves for the tragic end of the veteran. The landlord was particularly happy that the poor dead man had paid his reckoning before he went; and made a kind farewell speech on the occasion.

"He came," said he "in a storm, and he went in a storm; he came in the night, and he went in the night; he came nobody knows whence, and he has gone nobody knows where. For aught I know he has gone to sea once more on his chest, and may land to bother some people on the other side of the world! Though it's a thousand pities," added he, "if he has gone to Davy Jones' locker, that he had not left his own locker behind him."

"His locker! St. Nicholas preserve us!" cried Peechy Prauw. "I'd not have had that sea-chest in the house for any money; I'll warrant he'd come racketing after it at nights, and making a haunted house of the inn. And, as to his going to sea in his chest, I recollect what happened to Skipper Onderdonk's ship on his voyage from Amsterdam.

"The boatswain died during a storm, so they wrapped him up in a sheet, and put him in his own sea-chest, and threw him overboard; but they neglected in their hurry-skurry to say prayers over him—and the storm raged and roared louder than ever, and they saw the dead man seated in his chest, with his shroud for a sail, coming hard after the ship; and the sea breaking before him in great sprays like fire; and there they kept scudding day after day, and night after night, expecting every moment to go to wreck; and every night they saw the dead boatswain in his sea-chest trying to get up with them, and they heard his whistle above the blasts of wind, and he seemed to send great seas mountain high after them, that would have swamped the ship if they had not put up the dead-lights. And so it went on till they lost sight of him in the fogs off Newfoundland, and supposed he had veered ship and stood for Dead Man's Isle. So much for burying a man at sea without saying prayers over him."

The thundergust which had hitherto detained the company was now at an end. The cuckoo clock in the hall told midnight; every one pressed to depart, for seldom was such a late hour of the night trespassed on by these quiet burghers. As they sallied forth, they found the heavens once more serene. The storm which had lately obscured them had rolled away, and lay piled up in fleecy masses on the horizon, lighted up by the bright crescent of the moon, which looked like a little silver lamp hung up in a palace of clouds.

The dismal occurrence of the night, and the dismal narrations

they had made, had left a superstitious feeling in every mind. They cast a fearful glance at the spot where the buccaneer had disappeared, almost expecting to see him sailing on his chest in the cool moonshine. The trembling rays glittered along the waters, but all was placid; and the current dimpled over the spot where he had gone down. The party huddled together in a little crowd as they repaired homewards; particularly when they passed a lonely field where a man had been murdered; and even the sexton, who had to complete his journey alone, though accustomed, one would think, to ghosts and goblins, went a long way round, rather than pass by his own churchyard.

Wolfert Webber had now carried home a fresh stock of stories and notions to ruminate upon. These accounts of pots of money and Spanish treasures, buried here and there and everywhere, about the rocks and bays of these wild shores, made him almost dizzy. "Blessed St. Nicholas!" ejaculated he half aloud, "is it not possible to come upon one of these golden hoards, and to make one's self rich in a twinkling? How hard that I must go on, delving and delving, day in and day out, merely to make a morsel of bread, when one lucky stroke of a spade might enable me to ride in my carriage for the rest of my life?"

As he turned over in his thoughts all that had been told of the singular adventure of the negro fisherman, his imagination gave a totally different complexion to the tale. He saw in the gang of red-caps nothing but a crew of pirates burying their spoils, and his cupidity was once more awakened by the possibility of at length getting on the traces of some of this lurking wealth. Indeed, his infected fancy tinged everything with gold. He felt like the greedy inhabitant of Bagdad, when his eyes had been greased with the magic ointment of the dervise, that gave him to see all the treasures of the earth. Caskets of buried jewels, chests of ingots, and barrels of outlandish coins, seemed to court him from their concealments, and supplicate him to relieve them from their untimely graves.

On making private inquiries about the grounds said to be haunted by Father Red-cap, he was more and more confirmed in his surmise. He learned that the place had several times been visited by experienced money-diggers, who had heard black Sam's story, though none of them had met with success. On the contrary, they had always been dogged with ill-luck of some kind or other, in consequence, as Wolfert concluded, of not going to work at the proper time, and with the proper ceremonials. The last attempt had been made by Cobus Quackenbos, who dug for a whole night, and met with incredible difficulty; for, as fast as he threw one shovel full of earth out of the hole, two were thrown in by invisible hands. He succeeded so far, however, as to uncover an iron chest, when there was a terrible roaring, ramping, and raging of uncouth figures about the hole; and at length a shower

of blows, dealt by invisible cudgels, fairly belaboured him off of the forbidden ground. This Cobus Quackenbos had declared on his death-bed, so that there could not be any doubt of it. He was a man that had devoted many years of his life to money-digging, and it was thought would have ultimately succeeded, had he not died recently of a brain fever in the almshouse.

Wolfert Webber was now in a worry of trepidation and impatience; fearful lest some rival adventurer should get a scent of the buried gold. He determined privately to seek out the black fisherman, and get him to serve as guide to the place where he had witnessed the mysterious scene of interment. Sam was easily found; for he was one of those old habitual beings that live about a neighbourhood until they wear themselves a place in the public mind, and become, in a manner, public characters. There was not an unlucky urchin about town that did not know Sam the fisherman, and think that he had a right to play his tricks upon the old negro. Sam had led an amphibious life for more than half a century, about the shores of the bay, and the fishing-grounds of the Sound. He passed the greater part of his time on and in the water, particularly about Hell-gate: and might have been taken, in bad weather, for one of the hobgoblins that used to haunt that strait. There would he be seen, at all times, and in all weathers; sometimes in his skiff, anchored among the eddies, or prowling, like a shark about some wreck, where the fish are supposed to be most abundant. Sometimes seated on a rock from hour to hour, looking in the mist and drizzle, like a solitary heron watching for its prey. He was well acquainted with every hole and corner of the Sound; from the Wallabout to Hell-gate, and from Hell-gate even unto the Devil's Stepping-Stones; and it was even affirmed that he knew all the fish in the river by their Christian names.

Wolfert found him at his cabin, which was not much larger than a tolerable dog-house. It was rudely constructed of fragments of wrecks and drift-wood, and built on the rocky shore, at the foot of the old fort, just about what at present forms the point of the Battery. A "most ancient and fish-like smell" pervaded the place. Oars, paddles, and fishing-rods were leaning against the wall of the fort; a net was spread on the sands to dry; a skiff was drawn up on the beach, and at the door of his cabin was Mud Sam himself, indulging in the true negro luxury of sleeping in the sunshine.

Many years had passed away since the time of Sam's youthful adventure, and the snows of many a winter had grizzled the knotty wool upon his head. He perfectly recollected the circumstances, however, for he had often been called upon to relate them, though in his version of the story he differed in many points from Peechy Prauw; as is not unfrequently the case with authentic historians. As to the subsequent researches of money-diggers, Sam knew nothing about them; they were matters quite out of his line; neither did the cautious Wolfert care to disturb his thoughts on

that point. His only wish was to secure the old fisherman as a pilot to the spot, and this was readily effected. The long time that had intervened since his nocturnal adventure had effaced all Sam's awe of the place, and the promise of a trifling reward roused him at once from his sleep and his sunshine.

The tide was adverse to making the expedition by water, and Wolfert was too impatient to get to the land of promise, to wait for its turning; they set off, therefore, by land. A walk of four or five miles brought them to the edge of a wood, which at that time covered the greater part of the eastern side of the island. It was just beyond the pleasant region of Bloomen-dael. Here they struck into a long lane, straggling among trees and bushes, very much overgrown with weeds and mullen-stalks, as if but seldom used, and so completely overshadowed as to enjoy but a kind of twilight. Wild vines entangled the trees and flaunted in their faces; brambles and briers caught their clothes as they passed; the garter-snake glided across their path; the spotted toad hopped and waddled before them, and the restless cat-bird mewed at them from every thicket. Had Wolfert Webber been deeply read in romantic legend, he might have fancied himself entering upon forbidden, enchanted ground; or that these were some of the guardians set to keep watch upon buried treasure. As it was, the loneliness of the place, and the wild stories connected with it, had their effect upon his mind.

On reaching the lower end of the lane, they found themselves near the shore of the Sound in a kind of amphitheatre, surrounded by forest trees. The area had once been a grass-plot, but was now shagged with briers and rank weeds. At one end, and just on the river bank, was a ruined building, little better than a heap of rubbish, with a stack of chimneys rising like a solitary tower out of the centre. The current of the Sound rushed along just below it; with wildly grown trees drooping their branches into its waves.

Wolfert had not a doubt that this was the haunted house of Father Red-cap, and called to mind the story of Peechy Prauw. The evening was approaching, and the light, falling dubiously among these woody places, gave a melancholy tone to the scene, well calculated to foster any lurking feeling of awe or superstition. The night-hawk, wheeling about in the highest regions of the air, emitted his peevish, boding cry. The woodpecker gave a lonely tap now and then on some hollow tree, and the fire-bird* streamed by them with his deep-red plumage.

They now came to an inclosure that had once been a garden. It extended along the foot of a rocky ridge, but was little better than a wilderness of weeds, with here and there a matted rose-bush, or a peach or plum-tree grown wild and ragged, and covered with moss. At the lower end of the garden they passed a kind of vault in the side of a bank, facing the water. It had the look of

* Orchard Oriole.

a root house. The door, though decayed, was still strong, and appeared to have been recently patched up. Wolfert pushed it open. It gave a harsh grating upon its hinges, and striking against something like a box, a rattling sound ensued, and a skull rolled on the floor. Wolfert drew back shuddering, but was reassured on being informed by the negro that this was a family-vault, belonging to one of the old Dutch families that owned this estate; an assertion corroborated by the sight of coffins of various sizes piled within. Sam had been familiar with all these scenes when a boy, and now knew that he could not be far from the place of which they were in quest.

They now made their way to the water's edge, scrambling along ledges of rocks that overhung the waves, and obliged often to hold by shrubs and grape-vines to avoid slipping into the deep and hurried stream. At length they came to a small cove, or rather indent of the shore. It was protected by steep rocks, and overshadowed by a thick copse of oaks and chestnuts, so as to be sheltered and almost concealed. The beach shelved gradually within the cove, but the current swept deep and black and rapid along its jutting points. The negro paused; raised his remnant of a hat, and scratched his grizzled poll for a moment, as he regarded this nook; then suddenly clapping his hands, he stepped exultingly forward, and pointed to a large iron ring, stapled firmly in the rock, just where a broad shelf of stone furnished a commodious landing-place. It was the very spot where the red-caps had landed. Years had changed the more perishable features of the scene; but rock and iron yield slowly to the influence of time. On looking more closely, Wolfert remarked three crosses cut in the rock just above the ring, which had no doubt some mysterious signification. Old Sam now readily recognised the overhanging rock under which his skiff had been sheltered during the thunder-gust. To follow up the course which the midnight gang had taken, however, was a harder task. His mind had been so much taken up on that eventful occasion by the persons of the drama, as to pay but little attention to the scenes; and these places look so different by night and day. After wandering about for some time, however, they came to an opening among the trees which Sam thought resembled the place. There was a ledge of rock of moderate height like a wall on one side, which he thought might be the very ridge whence he had overlooked the diggers. Wolfert examined it narrowly, and at length discovered three crosses similar to those above the iron ring, cut deeply into the face of the rock, but nearly obliterated by moss that had grown over them. His heart leaped with joy, for he doubted not they were the private marks of the buccaneers. All now that remained was to ascertain the precise spot where the treasure lay buried; for otherwise he might dig at random in the neighbourhood of the crosses, without coming upon the spoils, and he had already had enough of such profitless labour. Here, how-

ever, the old negro was perfectly at a loss, and indeed perplexed him by a variety of opinions; for his recollections were all confused. Sometimes he declared it must have been at the foot of a mulberry-tree hard by; then beside a great white stone; then under a small green knoll, a short distance from the ledge of rocks; until at length Wolfert became as bewildered as himself.

The shadows of evening were now spreading themselves over the woods, and rock and tree began to mingle together. It was evidently too late to attempt anything further at present; and, indeed, Wolfert had come unprovided with implements to prosecute his researches. Satisfied, therefore, with having ascertained the place, he took note of all its landmarks, that he might recognise it again, and set out on his return homewards, resolved to prosecute this golden enterprise without delay.

The leading anxiety which had hitherto absorbed every feeling, being now in some measure appeased, fancy began to wander, and to conjure up a thousand shapes and chimeras as he returned through this haunted region. Pirates hanging in chains seemed to swing from every tree, and he almost expected to see some Spanish Don, with his throat cut from ear to ear, rising slowly out of the ground, and shaking the ghost of a money-bag.

Their way back lay through the desolate garden, and Wolfert's nerves had arrived at so sensitive a state that the flitting of a bird, the rustling of a leaf, or the falling of a nut, was enough to startle him. As they entered the confines of the garden, they caught sight of a figure at a distance advancing slowly up one of the walks, and bending under the weight of a burden. They paused and regarded him attentively. He wore what appeared to be a woollen cap, and still more alarming, of a most sanguinary red.

The figure moved slowly on, ascended the bank, and stopped at the very door of the sepulchral vault. Just before entering it he looked around. What was the affright of Wolfert, when he recognised the grisly visage of the drowned buccaneer! He uttered an ejaculation of horror. The figure slowly raised his iron fist, and shook it with a terrible menace. Wolfert did not pause to see any more, but hurried off as fast as his legs could carry him, nor was Sam slow in following at his heels, having all his ancient terrors revived. Away, then, did they scramble through bush and brake, horribly frightened at every bramble that tugged at their skirts, nor did they pause to breathe, until they had blundered their way through this perilous wood, and fairly reached the highroad to the city.

Several days elapsed before Wolfert could summon courage enough to prosecute the enterprise, so much had he been dismayed by the apparition, whether living or dead, of the grisly buccaneer. In the meantime, what a conflict of mind did he suffer! He neglected all his concerns, was moody and restless all day, lost his appetite, wandered in his thoughts and words, and committed

a thousand blunders. His rest was broken; and when he fell asleep, the nightmare, in shape of a huge money-bag, sat squatted upon his breast. He babbled about incalculable sums; fancied himself engaged in money-digging; threw the bed clothes right and left, in the idea that he was shovelling away the dirt; groped under the bed in quest of the treasure, and lugged forth, as he supposed, an inestimable pot of gold.

Dame Webber and her daughter were in despair at what they conceived a returning touch of insanity. There are two family oracles, one or other of which Dutch housewives consult in all cases of great doubt and perplexity—the dominie and the doctor. In the present instance they repaired to the doctor. There was at that time a little dark mouldy man of medicine, famous among the old wives of the Manhattoes for his skill, not only in the healing art, but in all matters of strange and mysterious nature. His name was Dr. Knipperhausen, but he was more commonly known by the appellation of the High German Doctor.* To him did the poor woman repair for counsel and assistance touching the mental vagaries of Wolfert Webber.

They found the doctor seated in his little study, clad in his dark camlet robe of knowledge, with his black velvet cap; after the manner of Boorhaave, Van Helmont, and other medical sages; a pair of green spectacles set in black horn upon his clubbed nose, and poring over a German folio that reflected back the darkness of his physiognomy. The doctor listened to their statement of the symptoms of Wolfert's malady with profound attention; but when they came to mention his raving about buried money, the little man pricked up his ears. Alas, poor women! they little knew the aid they had called in.

Dr. Knipperhausen had been half his life engaged in seeking the short cuts to fortune, in quest of which so many a long life-time is wasted. He had passed some years of his youth among the Harz mountains of Germany, and had derived much valuable instruction from the miners, touching the mode of seeking treasure buried in the earth. He had prosecuted his studies also under a travelling sage, who united the mysteries of medicine with magic and legerdemain. His mind, therefore, had become stored with all kinds of mystic lore; he had dabbled a little in astrology, alchemy, divination; knew how to detect stolen money, and to tell where springs of water lay hidden; in a word, by the dark nature of his knowledge he had acquired the name of the High German Doctor, which is pretty nearly equivalent to that of necromancer. The doctor had often heard rumours of treasure being buried in various parts of the island, and had long been anxious to get on the traces of it. No sooner were Wolfert's waking and sleeping vagaries confided to him, than he beheld in them the confirmed

* The same, no doubt, of whom mention is made in the history of Dolph Heyliger.

symptoms of a case of money-digging, and lost no time in probing it to the bottom. Wolfert had long been sorely oppressed in mind by the golden secret, and as a family physician is a kind of father confessor, he was glad of any opportunity of unburdening himself. So far from curing, the doctor caught the malady from his patient. The circumstances unfolded to him awakened all his cupidity; he had not a doubt of money being buried somewhere in the neighbourhood of the mysterious crosses, and offered to join Wolfert in the search. He informed him that much secrecy and caution must be observed in enterprises of the kind; that money is only to be digged for at night; with certain forms and ceremonies; the burning of drugs; the repeating of mystic words, and above all, that the seekers must first be provided with a divining rod, which had the wonderful property of pointing to the very spot on the surface of the earth under which treasure lay hidden. As the doctor had given much of his mind to these matters, he charged himself with all the necessary preparations, and, as the quarter of the moon was propitious, he undertook to have the divining rod ready by a certain night.*

Wolfert's heart leaped with joy at having met with so learned and able a coadjutor. Everything went on secretly, but swimmingly. The doctor had many consultations with his patient, and the good woman of the household lauded the comforting effect of his visits. In the meantime the wonderful divining rod, that great key to nature's secrets, was duly prepared. The doctor had thumbed over all his books of knowledge for the occasion; and the black fisherman was engaged to take them in his skiff to the

* The following note was found appended to this passage in the handwriting of Mr. Knickerbocker. "There has been much written against the divining rod by those light minds who are ever ready to scoff at the mysteries of nature: but I fully join with Dr. Knipperhausen in giving it my faith. I shall not insist upon its efficacy in discovering the concealment of stolen goods, the boundary stones of fields, the traces of robbers and murderers, or even the existence of subterraneous springs and streams of water: albeit, I think these properties not to be readily discredited: but of its potency in discovering veins of precious metal, and hidden sums of money and jewels, I have not the least doubt. Some said that the rod turned only in the hands of persons who had been born in particular months of the year; hence astrologers had recourse to planetary influence when they would procure a talisman. Others declared that the properties of the rod were either an effect of chance, or the fraud of the holder, or the work of the devil. Thus saith the reverend father Gaspard Sebett in his Treatise on Magic: 'Propter hæc et similia argumenta audacter ego promisero vim conversivam virgulæ bifurcatæ nequaquam naturalem esse, sed vel casu vel fraude virgulam tractantis vel ope diaboli,' &c.

"Georgius Agricola also was of opinion that it was a mere delusion of the devil to inveigle the avaricious and unwary into his clutches, and in his treatise 'de re Metallica,' lays particular stress on the mysterious words pronounced by those persons who employed the divining rod during his time. But I make not a doubt that the divining rod is one of those secrets of natural magic, the mystery of which is to be explained by the sympathies existing between physical things operated upon by the planets, and rendered efficacious by the strong faith of the individual. Let the divining rod be properly gathered at the proper time of the moon, cut into the proper form, used with the necessary ceremonies, and with a perfect faith in its efficacy, and I can confidently recommend it to my fellow-citizens as an infallible means of discovering the various places on the Island of the Manhattoes where treasure hath been buried in the olden time. "D. K."

scene of enterprise; to work with spade and pickaxe in unearthing the treasure; and to freight his bark with the weighty spoils they were certain of finding.

At length the appointed night arrived for this perilous undertaking. Before Wolfert left his home he counselled his wife and daughter to go to bed, and feel no alarm if he should not return during the night. Like reasonable women, on being told not to feel alarm, they fell immediately into a panic. They saw at once by his manner that something unusual was in agitation; all their fears about the unsettled state of his mind were revived with tenfold force: they hung about him, entreating him not to expose himself to the night air, but all in vain. When once Wolfert was mounted on his hobby, it was no easy matter to get him out of the saddle. It was a clear starlight night, when he issued out of the portal of the Webber palace. He wore a large flapped hat tied under the chin with a handkerchief of his daughter's, to secure him from the night damp, while Dame Webber threw her long red cloak about his shoulders, and fastened it round his neck.

The doctor had been no less carefully armed and accoutred by his housekeeper, the vigilant Frau Ilsy; and sallied forth in his camlet robe by way of surcoat; his black velvet cap under his cocked hat, a thick clasped book under his arm, a basket of drugs and dried herbs in one hand, and in the other the miraculous rod of divination.

The great church clock struck ten as Wolfert and the doctor passed by the churchyard, and the watchman bawled in hoarse voice a long and doleful "all's well!" A deep sleep had already fallen upon this primitive little burgh: nothing disturbed this awful silence, excepting now and then the bark of some profligate night-walking dog, or the serenade of some romantic cat. It is true, Wolfert fancied more than once that he heard the sound of a stealthy footfall at a distance behind them; but it might have been merely the echo of their own steps along the quiet streets. He thought also at one time that he saw a tall figure skulking after them—stopping when they stopped, and moving on as they proceeded; but the dim and uncertain lamp-light threw such vague gleams and shadows, that this might all have been mere fancy.

They found the old fisherman waiting for them, smoking his pipe in the stern of his skiff, which was moored just in front of his little cabin. A pickaxe and spade were lying in the bottom of the boat, with a dark lantern, and a stone bottle of good Dutch courage, in which honest Sam no doubt put even more faith than Dr. Knipperhausen in his drugs.

Thus then did these three worthies embark in their cockleshell of a skiff upon this nocturnal expedition, with a wisdom and valour equalled only by the three wise men of Gotham, who adventured to sea in a bowl. The tide was rising and running rapidly up the Sound. The current bore them along, almost without the aid of

an oar. The profile of the town lay all in shadow. Here and there a light feebly glimmered from some sick chamber, or from the cabin window of some vessel at anchor in the stream. Not a cloud obscured the deep starry firmament, the lights of which wavered on the surface of the placid river; and a shooting meteor, streaking its pale course in the very direction they were taking, was interpreted by the doctor into a most propitious omen.

In a little while they glided by the point of Corlaer's Hook with the rural inn which had been the scene of such night adventures. The family had retired to rest, and the house was dark and still. Wolfert felt a chill pass over him as they passed the point where the buccaneer had disappeared. He pointed it out to Dr. Knipperhausen. While regarding it, they thought they saw a boat actually lurking at the very place; but the shore cast such a shadow over the border of the water that they could discern nothing distinctly. They had not proceeded far when they heard the low sounds of distant oars, as if cautiously pulled. Sam plied his oars with redoubled vigour, and knowing all the eddies and currents of the stream, soon left their followers, if such they were, far astern. In a little while they stretched across Turtle bay and Kip's bay, then shrouded themselves in the deep shadows of the Manhattan shore, and glided swiftly along, secure from observation. At length the negro shot his skiff into a little cove, darkly embowered by trees, and made it fast to the well-known iron ring. They now landed, and lighting the lantern, gathered their various implements and proceeded slowly through the bushes. Every sound startled them, even that of their own footsteps among the dry leaves; and the hooting of a screech-owl, from the shattered chimney of the neighbouring ruin, made their blood run cold.

In spite of all Wolfert's caution in taking note of the landmarks, it was some time before they could find the open place among the trees, where the treasure was supposed to be buried. At length they came to the ledge of rock; and on examining its surface by the aid of the lantern, Wolfert recognised the three mystic crosses. Their hearts beat quick, for the momentous trial was at hand that was to determine their hopes.

The lantern was now held by Wolfert Webber, while the doctor produced the divining rod. It was a forked twig, one end of which was grasped firmly in each hand, while the centre, forming the stem, pointed perpendicularly upwards. The doctor moved this wand about, within a certain distance of the earth, from place to place, but for some time without any effect, while Wolfert kept the light of the lantern turned full upon it, and watched it with the most breathless interest. At length the rod began slowly to turn. The doctor grasped it with greater earnestness, his hands trembling with the agitation of his mind. The wand continued to turn gradually, until at length the stem had reversed its

position, and pointed perpendicularly downward, and remained pointing to one spot as fixedly as the needle to the pole.

"This is the spot!" said the doctor, in an almost inaudible tone.

Wolfert's heart was in his throat.

"Shall I dig?" said the negro, grasping the spade.

"*Pots tausends*, no!" replied the little doctor hastily. He now ordered his companions to keep close by him, and to maintain the most inflexible silence. That certain precautions must be taken and ceremonies used to prevent the evil spirits which kept about buried treasure from doing them any harm. He then drew a circle about the place, enough to include the whole party. He next gathered dry twigs and leaves and made a fire, upon which he threw certain drugs and dried herbs which he had brought in his basket. A thick smoke rose, diffusing a potent odour, savouring marvellously of brimstone and assafœtida, which, however grateful it might be to the olfactory nerves of spirits, nearly strangled poor Wolfert, and produced a fit of coughing and wheezing that made the whole grove resound. Dr. Knipperhausen then unclasped the volume which he had brought under his arm, which was printed in red and black characters in German text. While Wolfert held the lantern, the doctor, by the aid of his spectacles, read off several forms of conjuration in Latin and German. He then ordered Sam to seize the pickaxe and proceed to work. The close-bound soil gave obstinate signs of not having been disturbed for many a year. After having picked his way through the surface, Sam came to a bed of sand and gravel, which he threw briskly to right and left with his spade.

"Hark!" said Wolfert, who fancied he heard a trampling among the dry leaves, and a rustling through the bushes. Sam paused for a moment, and they listened. No footstep was near. The bat flitted by them in silence; a bird, roused from its roost by the light which glared up among the trees, flew circling about the flame. In the profound stillness of the woodland, they could distinguish the current rippling along the rocky shore, and the distant murmuring and roaring of Hell-gate.

The negro continued his labours, and had already digged a considerable hole. The doctor stood on the edge, reading formulæ every now and then from his black-letter volume, or throwing more drugs and herbs upon the fire; while Wolfert bent anxiously over the pit, watching every stroke of the spade. Any one witnessing the scene thus lighted up by fire, lantern, and the reflection of Wolfert's red mantle, might have mistaken the little doctor for some foul magician, busied in his incantations, and the grizzly-headed negro for some swart goblin, obedient to his commands.

At length the spade of the fisherman struck upon something that sounded hollow. The sound vibrated to Wolfert's heart. He struck his spade again.—

"'Tis a chest," said Sam.

"Full of gold, I'll warrant it!" cried Wolfert, clasping his hands with rapture.

Scarcely had he uttered the words when a sound from above caught his ear. He cast up his eyes, and lo! by the expiring light of the fire he beheld, just over the disk of the rock, what appeared to be the grim visage of the drowned buccaneer, grinning hideously down upon him.

Wolfert gave a loud cry, and let fall the lantern. His panic communicated itself to his companions. The negro leaped out of the hole; the doctor dropped his book and basket and began to pray in German. All was horror and confusion. The fire was scattered about, the lantern extinguished. In their hurry-scurry they ran against and confounded one another. They fancied a legion of hobgoblins let loose upon them, and that they saw, by the fitful gleams of the scattered embers, strange figures, in red caps, gibbering and ramping around them. The doctor ran one way, the negro another, and Wolfert made for the water side. As he plunged struggling onwards through brush and brake, he heard the tread of some one in pursuit. He scrambled frantically forward. The footsteps gained upon him. He felt himself grasped by his cloak, when suddenly his pursuer was attacked in turn: a fierce fight and struggle ensued—a pistol was discharged that lit up rock and bush for a second, and showed two figures grappling together—all was then darker than ever. The contest continued—the combatants clinched each other, and panted, and groaned, and rolled among the rocks. There was snarling and growling as of a cur, mingled with curses, in which Wolfert fancied he could recognise the voice of the buccaneer. He would fain have fled, but he was on the brink of a precipice, and could go no farther.

Again the parties were on their feet; again there was a tugging and struggling, as if strength alone could decide the combat, until one was precipitated from the brow of the cliff, and sent headlong into the deep stream that whirled below. Wolfert heard the plunge, and a kind of strangling, bubbling murmur, but the darkness of the night hid everything from him, and the swiftness of the current swept every thing instantly out of hearing. One of the combatants was disposed of, but whether friend or foe, Wolfert could not tell, nor whether they might not both be foes. He heard the survivor approach, and his terror revived. He saw, where the profile of the rocks rose against the horizon, a human form advancing. He could not be mistaken: it must be the buccaneer. Whither should he fly!—a precipice was on one side—a murderer on the other. The enemy approached—he was close at hand. Wolfert attempted to let himself down the face of the cliff. His cloak caught in a thorn that grew on the edge. He was jerked from off his feet, and held dangling in the air, half-choked by the string with which his careful wife had

fastened the garment round his neck. Wolfert thought his last moment was arrived; already had he committed his soul to St. Nicholas, when the string broke, and he tumbled down the bank, bumping from rock to rock, and bush to bush, and leaving the red cloak fluttering like a bloody banner in the air.

It was a long while before Wolfert came to himself. When he opened his eyes, the ruddy streaks of morning were already shooting up the sky. He found himself grievously battered, and lying in the bottom of a boat. He attempted to sit up, but was too sore and stiff to move. A voice requested him in friendly accents to lie still. He turned his eyes towards the speaker: it was Dirk Waldron. He had dogged the party, at the earnest request of Dame Webber and her daughter, who, with the laudable curiosity of their sex, had pried into the secret consultations of Wolfert and the doctor. Dirk had been completely distanced in following the light skiff of the fishermen, and had just come in time to rescue the poor money-digger from his pursuer.

Thus ended this perilous enterprise. The doctor and Black Sam severally found their way back to the Manhattoes, each having some dreadful tale of peril to relate. As to poor Wolfert, instead of returning in triumph laden with bags of gold, he was borne home on a shutter, followed by a rabble-rout of curious urchins. His wife and daughter saw the dismal pageant from a distance, and alarmed the neighbourhood with their cries: they thought the poor man had suddenly settled the great debt of nature in one of his wayward moods. Finding him, however, still living, they had him speedily to bed, and a jury of old matrons of the neighbourhood assembled, to determine how he should be doctored. The whole town was in a buzz with the story of the money-diggers. Many repaired to the scene of the previous night's adventures: but though they found the very place of the digging, they discovered nothing that compensated them for their trouble. Some say they found the fragments of an oaken chest, and an iron pot-lid, which savoured strongly of hidden money; and that in the old family vault there were traces of bales and boxes, but this is all very dubious.

In fact, the secret of all this story has never to this day been discovered: whether any treasure were ever actually buried at that place; whether, if so, it were carried off at night by those who had buried it; or whether it still remains there under the guardianship of gnomes and spirits until it shall be properly sought for, is all matter of conjecture. For my part I incline to the latter opinion; and make no doubt that great sums lie buried, both there and in other parts of this island and its neighbourhood, ever since the times of the buccaneers and the Dutch colonists; and I would earnestly recommend the search after them to such of my fellow-citizens as are not engaged in any other speculations.

There were many conjectures formed, also, as to who and what

was the strange man of the seas who had domineered over the little fraternity at Corlaer's Hook for a time; disappeared so strangely, and reappeared so fearfully. Some supposed him a smuggler stationed at that place to assist his comrades in landing their goods among the rocky coves of the island. Others, that he was one of the ancient comrades of Kidd or Bradish, returned to convey away treasures formerly hidden in the vicinity. The only circumstance that throws any thing like a vague light on this mysterious matter, is a report which prevailed of a strange foreign-built shallop, with much the look of a picaroon, having been seen hovering about the Sound for several days without landing or reporting herself, though boats were seen going to and from her at night: and that she was seen standing out of the mouth of the harbour, in the grey of the dawn, after the catastrophe of the money-diggers.

I must not omit to mention another report, also, which I confess is rather apocryphal, of the buccaneer, who was supposed to have been drowned, being seen before daybreak, with a lantern in his hand, seated astride of his great sea-chest, and sailing through Hell-gate, which just then began to roar and bellow with redoubled fury.

While all the gossip world was thus filled with talk and rumour, poor Wolfert lay sick and sorrowful in his bed, bruised in body and sorely beaten down in mind. His wife and daughter did all they could to bind up his wounds, both corporal and spiritual. The good old dame never stirred from his bedside, where she sat knitting from morning till night; while his daughter busied herself about him with the fondest care. Nor did they lack assistance from abroad. Whatever may be said of the desertion of friends in distress, they had no complaint of the kind to make. Not an old wife of the neighbourhood but abandoned her work to crowd to the mansion of Wolfert Webber, inquire after his health, and the particulars of his story. Not one came moreover without her little pipkin of pennyroyal, sage, balm, or other herb tea, delighted at an opportunity of signalizing her kindness and her doctorship. What drenchings did not the poor Wolfert undergo, and all in vain! It was a moving sight to behold him wasting away day by day; growing thinner and thinner, and ghastlier and ghastlier, and staring with rueful visage from under an old patchwork counterpane, upon the jury of matrons kindly assembled to sigh and groan and look unhappy around him.

Dirk Waldron was the only being that seemed to shed a ray of sunshine into this house of mourning. He came in with cheery look and manly spirit, and tried to reanimate the expiring heart of the poor money-digger, but it was all in vain. Wolfert was completely done over. If anything was wanting to complete his despair, it was a notice served upon him in the midst of his distress, that the corporation were about to run a new street through

the very centre of his cabbage-garden. He now saw nothing before him but poverty and ruin; his last reliance, the garden of his forefathers, was to be laid waste, and what then was to become of his poor wife and child?

His eyes filled with tears as they followed the dutiful Amy out of the room one morning. Dirk Waldron was seated beside him; Wolfert grasped his hand, pointed after his daughter, and for the first time since his illness, broke the silence he had maintained.

"I am going!" said he, shaking his head feebly; "and when I am gone—my poor daughter——"

"Leave her to me, father!" said Dirk, manfully—"I'll take care of her!"

Wolfert looked up in the face of the cheery, strapping youngster, and saw there was none better able to take care of a woman.

"Enough," said he—"she is yours!—and now fetch me a lawyer—let me make my will and die."

The lawyer was brought,—a dapper, bustling, round-headed little man, Roorback (or Rollebuck as it was pronounced) by name. At the sight of him the women broke into loud lamentations, for they looked upon the signing of a will as the signing of a death-warrant. Wolfert made a feeble motion for them to be silent. Poor Amy buried her face and her grief in the bed-curtain. Dame Webber resumed her knitting to hide her distress, which betrayed itself however in a pellucid tear, which trickled silently down, and hung at the end of her peaked nose; while the cat, the only unconcerned member of the family, played with the good dame's ball of worsted, as it rolled about the floor.

Wolfert lay on his back, his night-cap drawn over his forehead; his eyes closed; his whole visage the picture of death. He begged the lawyer to be brief, for he felt his end approaching, and that he had no time to lose. The lawyer nibbed his pen, spread out his paper, and prepared to write.

"I give and bequeath," said Wolfert, faintly, "my small farm——"

"What—all!" exclaimed the lawyer.

Wolfert half opened his eyes and looked upon the lawyer.

"Yes—all," said he.

"What! all that great patch of land with cabbages and sunflowers, which the corporation is just going to run a main street through?"

"The same," said Wolfert, with a heavy sigh, and sinking back upon his pillow.

"I wish him joy that inherits it!" said the little lawyer, chuckling and rubbing his hands involuntarily.

"What do you mean?" said Wolfert, again opening his eyes.

"That he'll be one of the richest men in the place!" cried little Rollebuck.

The expiring Wolfert seemed to step back from the threshold of

existence: his eyes again lighted up; he raised himself in his bed, shoved back his worsted red nightcap, and stared broadly at the lawyer.

"You don't say so!" exclaimed he.

"Faith, but I do!" rejoined the other. "Why, when that great field and that huge meadow come to be laid out in streets, and cut up into snug building lots—why, whoever owns it need not pull off his hat to the patroon!"

"Say you so?" cried Wolfert, half thrusting one leg out of bed; "why, then I think I'll not make my will yet!"

To the surprise of every body the dying man actually recovered. The vital spark, which had glimmered faintly in the socket, received fresh fuel from the oil of gladness, which the little lawyer poured into his soul. It once more burnt up into a flame.

Give physic to the heart, ye who would revive the body of a spirit-broken man! In a few days Wolfert left his room; in a few days more his table was covered with deeds, plans of streets, and building lots. Little Rollebuck was constantly with him, his right-hand man and adviser; and instead of making his will, assisted in the more agreeable task of making his fortune. In fact Wolfert Webber was one of those worthy Dutch burghers of the Manhattoes whose fortunes have been made, in a manner, in spite of themselves; who have tenaciously held on to their hereditary acres, raising turnips and cabbages about the skirts of the city, hardly able to make both ends meet, until the corporation has cruelly driven streets through their abodes, and they have suddenly awakened out of their lethargy, and, to their astonishment, found themselves rich men.

Before many months had elapsed, a great bustling street passed through the very centre of the Webber garden, just where Wolfert had dreamed of finding a treasure. His golden dream was accomplished; he did indeed find an unlooked-for source of wealth; for, when his paternal lands were distributed into building lots, and rented out to safe tenants, instead of producing a paltry crop of cabbages, they returned him an abundant crop of rents; insomuch that on quarter-day, it was a goodly sight to see his tenants knocking at his door, from morning till night, each with a little round-bellied bag of money, a golden produce of the soil.

The ancient mansion of his forefathers was still kept up; but instead of being a little yellow fronted Dutch house in a garden, it now stood boldly in the midst of a street, the grand house of the neighbourhood; for Wolfert enlarged it with a wing on each side, and a cupola or tea-room on top, where he might climb up and smoke his pipe in hot weather; and in the course of time the whole mansion was overrun by the chubby-faced progeny of Amy Webber and Dirk Waldron.

As Wolfert waxed old, and rich, and corpulent, he also set up a great gingerbread-coloured carriage, drawn by a pair of black

Flanders mares, with tails that swept the ground; and to commemorate the origin of his greatness, he had for his crest, a full-blown cabbage painted on the panels, with the pithy motto Alles Kopf, that is to say, ALL HEAD; meaning thereby that he had risen by sheer head-work.

To fill the measure of his greatness, in the fulness of time the renowned Ramm Rapelye slept with his fathers, and Wolfert Webber succeeded to the leather-bottomed arm-chair, in the inn parlour at Corlaer's Hook; where he long reigned greatly honoured and respected, insomuch that he was never known to tell a story without its being believed, nor to utter a joke without its being laughed at.

THE END.

THE

VOYAGES AND DISCOVERIES

OF THE

COMPANIONS OF COLUMBUS.

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ALONZO DE OJEDA,*

HIS FIRST VOYAGE, IN WHICH HE WAS ACCOMPANIED BY AMERIGO VESPUCCI.†

CHAPTER I.

Some Account of Ojeda—Of Juan de la Cosa—Of Amerigo Vespucci—Preparations for the Voyage.

[1499.]

Those who have read the History of Columbus will, doubtless, remember the character and exploits of Alonzo de Ojeda; as some of the readers of the following pages, however, may not have perused that work, and as it is proposed at present to trace the subsequent fortunes of this youthful adventurer, a brief sketch of him may not be deemed superfluous.

Alonzo de Ojeda was a native of Cuenca, in New Castile, and of a respectable family. He was brought up as a page or esquire, in the service of Don Luis de Cerda, duke of Medina Celi, one of the most powerful nobles of Spain; the same who for some time patronized Columbus during his application to the Spanish court.‡

In those warlike days, when the peninsula was distracted by contests between the Christian kingdoms, by feuds between the nobles and the crown, and by incessant and marauding warfare with the Moors, the household of a Spanish nobleman was a complete school of arms, where the youth of the country were sent to be trained up in all

* Ojeda is pronounced in Spanish Oheda, with a strong aspiration of the *h*.

† Vespucci, pronounced Vespuchy.

‡ Varones Ilustres, por F. Pizarro y Orellana, p. 41. Las Casas, Hist. Ind., lib. i. cap. 82.

kinds of hardy exercises, and to be led to battle under an illustrious banner. Such was especially the case with the service of the duke of Medina Celi, who possessed princely domains, whose household was a petty court, who led legions of armed retainers to the field, and who appeared in splendid state and with an immense retinue, more as an ally of Ferdinand and Isabella, than as a subject. He engaged in many of the roughest expeditions of the memorable war of Granada, always insisting on leading his own troops in person, when the service was of peculiar difficulty and danger. Alonzo de Ojeda was formed to signalize himself in such a school. Though small of stature, he was well made, and of wonderful force and activity, with a towering spirit that seemed to make up for deficiency of height. He was a bold and graceful horseman, an excellent foot-soldier, dextrous with every weapon, and noted for his extraordinary skill and adroitness in all feats of strength and agility.

He must have been quite young when he followed the duke of Medina Celi, as page, to the Moorish wars; for he was but about twenty-one years of age when he accompanied Columbus in his second voyage; he had already, however, distinguished himself by his enterprising spirit and headlong valour; and his exploits during that voyage contributed to enhance his reputation. He returned to Spain with Columbus, but did not accompany him in his third voyage, in the spring of 1498. He was probably impatient of subordination, and ambitious of a separate employment or command, which the influence of his connections gave him a great chance of obtaining. He had a cousin german of his own name, the reverend Padre Alonzo de Ojeda, a Dominican friar, one of the first inquisitors of Spain, and a great favourite with the Catholic sovereigns.* This father inquisitor was, moreover, an intimate friend of the bishop Don Juan Rodriguez Fonseca, who had the chief management of the affairs of the Indies, under which general name were comprehended all the countries discovered in the New World. Through the good offices of his cousin inquisitor, therefore, Ojeda had been introduced to the notice of the bishop, who took him into his especial favour and patronage. Mention has already been made, in the History of Columbus, of a present made by the bishop to Ojeda of a small Flemish painting of the Holy Virgin. This the young adventurer carried about with him as a protecting relic, invoking it at all times of

* Pizarro, Varones Ilustres.

peril, whether by sea or land; and to the especial care of the Virgin he attributed the remarkable circumstance that he had never been wounded in any of the innumerable brawls and battles into which he was continually betrayed by his rash and fiery temperament.

While Ojeda was lingering about the court, letters were received from Columbus, giving an account of the events of his third voyage, especially of his discovery of the coast of Paria, which he described as abounding in drugs and spices, in gold and silver, and precious stones, and, above all, in oriental pearls, and which he supposed to be the borders of that vast and unknown region of the East, wherein, according to certain learned theorists, was situated the terrestrial paradise. Specimens of the pearls, procured in considerable quantities from the natives, accompanied his epistle, together with charts descriptive of his route. These tidings caused a great sensation among the maritime adventurers of Spain; but no one was more excited by them than Alonzo de Ojeda, who, from his intimacy with the bishop, had full access to the charts and correspondence of Columbus. He immediately conceived the project of making a voyage in the route thus marked out by the admiral, and of seizing upon the first fruits of discovery which he had left ungathered. His scheme met with ready encouragement from Fonseca, who, as has heretofore been shown, was an implacable enemy to Columbus, and willing to promote any measure that might injure or molest him. The bishop accordingly granted a commission to Ojeda, authorizing him to fit out an armament and proceed on a voyage of discovery, with the proviso merely that he should not visit any territories appertaining to Portugal, nor any of the lands discovered in the name of Spain previous to the year 1495. The latter part of this provision appears to have been craftily worded by the bishop, so as to leave the coast of Paria and its pearl-fisheries open to Ojeda, they having been recently discovered by Columbus in 1498.

The commission was signed by Fonseca alone, in virtue of general powers vested in him for such purposes, but the signature of the sovereigns did not appear on the instrument, and it is doubtful whether their sanction was sought on the occasion. He knew that Columbus had recently remonstrated against a royal mandate issued in 1495, permitting voyages of discovery by private adventurers, and that the sovereigns had in consequence revoked their mandate wherever it might be deemed preju-

dicial to the stipulated privileges of the admiral.* It is probable, therefore, that the bishop avoided raising any question that might impede the enterprise; being confident of the ultimate approbation of Ferdinand, who would be well pleased to have his dominions in the New World extended by the discoveries of private adventurers, undertaken at their own expense. It was stipulated in this, as well as in subsequent licenses for private expeditions, that a certain proportion of the profits, generally a fourth or fifth, should be reserved for the crown.

Having thus obtained permission to make the voyage, the next consideration with Ojeda was to find the means. He was a young adventurer, a mere soldier of fortune, and destitute of wealth; but he had a high reputation for courage and enterprise, and with these, it was thought, would soon make his way to the richest parts of the newly-discovered lands, and have the wealth of the Indies at his disposal. He had no difficulty, therefore, in finding moneyed associates among the rich merchants of Seville, who, in that age of discovery, were ever ready to stake their property upon the schemes of roving navigators. With such assistance, he soon equipped a squadron of four vessels at Port St. Mary, opposite Cadiz. Among the seamen who engaged with him were several just returned from accompanying Columbus in his voyage to this very coast of Paria. The principal associate of Ojeda, and one on whom he placed great reliance, was Juan de la Cosa; who accompanied him as first mate, or, as it was termed, chief pilot. This was a bold Biscayan, who may be regarded as a disciple of Columbus, with whom he had sailed in his second voyage, when he coasted Cuba and Jamaica, and he had since accompanied Rodrigo de Bastides, in an expedition along the coast of Terra Firma. The hardy veteran was looked up to by his contemporaries as an oracle of the seas, and was pronounced one of the most able mariners of the day; he may be excused, therefore, if, in his harmless vanity, he considered himself on a par even with Columbus.†

Another conspicuous associate of Ojeda, in this voyage, was Amerigo Vespucci, a Florentine merchant, induced by broken fortunes and a rambling disposition to seek adventures in the New World. Whether he had any pecuniary interest in the expedition, and in what capacity he sailed, does not appear. His importance has entirely

* Navarrete, tom. ii. Document cxiii.
† Navarrete, Colec. Viag., tom. iii. p. 4.

arisen from subsequent circumstances; from his having written and published a narrative of his voyages, and from his name having eventually been given to the New World.

CHAPTER II.

Departure from Spain—Arrival on the Coast of Paria—Customs of the Natives.

Ojeda sailed from Port St. Mary on the 20th of May, 1499, and, having touched for supplies at the Canaries, took a departure from Gomara, pursuing the route of Columbus in his third voyage, being guided by the chart he had sent home, as well as by the mariners who had accompanied him on that occasion. At the end of twenty-four days he reached the continent of the New World, about two hundred leagues farther south than the part discovered by Columbus, being, as it is supposed, the coast of Surinam.*

Hence he ran along the coast of the Gulf of Paria, passing the mouths of many rivers, but especially those of the Esquivo and the Oronoko. These, to the astonishment of the Spaniards, unaccustomed as yet to the mighty rivers of the New World, poured forth such a prodigious volume of water, as to freshen the sea for a great extent. They beheld none of the natives until they arrived at Trinidad, on which island they met with traces of the recent visit of Columbus.

Vespucci, in his letters, gives a long description of the people of this island and of the coast of Paria, who were of the Carib race, tall, well made, and vigorous, and expert with the bow, the lance, and the buckler. His description, in general, resembles those which have frequently been given of the aboriginals of the New World; there are two or three particulars, however, worthy of citation.

They appeared, he said, to believe in no religious creed, to have no place of worship, and to make no prayers nor sacrifices; but, he adds, from the voluptuousness of their lives, they might be considered epicureans.† Their habitations were built in the shape of bells; of the trunks of trees, thatched with palm-leaves, and were proof against wind and weather. They appeared to be in common, and some of them were of such magnitude as to contain six

* Navarrete, tom. iii. p. 5.

† Viages de Vespucci. Navarrete, tom. iii. p. 211.

hundred persons: in one place there were eight principal houses capable of sheltering nearly ten thousand inhabitants. Every seven or eight years the natives were obliged to change their residence, from the maladies engendered by the heat of the climate in their crowded habitations.

Their riches consisted in beads and ornaments made from the bones of fishes; in small white and green stones strung like rosaries, with which they adorned their persons, and in the beautiful plumes of various colours for which the tropical birds are noted.

The Spaniards smiled at their simplicity in attaching an extraordinary value to such worthless trifles; while the savages, in all probability, were equally surprised at beholding the strangers so eager after gold, and pearls, and precious stones, which to themselves were objects of indifference.

Their manner of treating the dead was similar to that observed among the natives of some of the islands. Having deposited the corpse in a cavern or sepulchre, they placed a jar of water and a few eatables at its head, and then abandoned it without moan or lamentation. In some parts of the coast, when a person was considered near his end, his nearest relatives bore him to the woods, and laid him in a hammock suspended to the trees. They then danced round him until evening, when, having left within his reach sufficient meat and drink to sustain him for four days, they repaired to their habitations. If he recovered and returned home, he was received with much ceremony and rejoicing; if he died of his malady or of famine, nothing more was thought of him.

Their mode of treating a fever is also worthy of mention. In the height of the malady they plunged the patient in a bath of the coldest water, after which they obliged him to make many evolutions round a great fire, until he was in a violent heat, when they put him to bed, that he might sleep: a treatment by which Amerigo Vespucci declares he saw many cured.

CHAPTER III.

Coasting of Terra Firma—Military Expedition of Ojeda.

After touching at various parts of Trinidad and the Gulf of Paria, Ojeda passed through the strait of the Boca del Drago, or Dragon's Mouth, which Columbus had found so formidable, and then steered his course along the coast

of Terra Firma, landing occasionally, until he arrived at Curiana, or the Gulf of Pearls. Hence he stood to the opposite island of Margarita, previously discovered by Columbus, and since renowned for its pearl-fishery. This, as well as several adjacent islands, he visited and explored; after which he returned to the main-land, and touched at Cumana and Maracapana, where he found the rivers infested with alligators, resembling the crocodiles of the Nile.

Finding a convenient harbour at Maracapana, he unloaded and careened his vessels there, and built a small brigantine. The natives came to him in great numbers, bringing abundance of venison, fish, and cassava bread, and aiding the seamen in their labours. Their hospitality was not certainly disinterested, for they sought to gain the protection of the Spaniards, whom they reverenced as superhuman beings. When they thought they had sufficiently secured their favour, they represented to Ojeda that their coast was subject to invasion from a distant island, the inhabitants of which were cannibals, and carried their people into captivity, to be devoured at their unnatural banquets. They besought Ojeda, therefore, to avenge them upon these ferocious enemies.

The request was gratifying to the fighting propensities of Ojeda, and to his love of adventure, and was readily granted. Taking seven of the natives on board of his vessels, as guides, he set sail in quest of the cannibals. After sailing for seven days he came to a chain of islands, some peopled, others uninhabited, supposed to have been the Caribbee islands. One of these was pointed out by his guides as the habitation of their foes. On running near the shore, he beheld it thronged with savages, decorated with coronets of gaudy plumes, their bodies painted with a variety of colours. They were armed with bows and arrows, with darts, lances, and bucklers, and seemed prepared to defend their island from invasion.

The show of war was calculated to rouse the martial spirit of Ojeda. He brought his ships to anchor, ordered out his boats, and provided each with a paterero or small cannon. Besides the oarsmen, each boat contained a number of soldiers, who were told to crouch out of sight in the bottom. The boats then pulled in steadily for the shore. As they approached, the Indians let fly a cloud of arrows, but without much effect. Seeing the boats continue to advance, the savages threw themselves into the sea, and brandished their lances to prevent their landing.

Upon this, the soldiers sprang up and discharged the patereroes. At the sound and smoke, the savages abandoned the water in affright, while Ojeda and his men leaped on shore and pursued them. The Carib warriors rallied on the banks, and fought for a long time with a courage peculiar to their race, but were at length driven to the woods, at the edge of the sword, leaving many killed and wounded on the field of battle.

On the following day the savages were seen on the shore in still greater numbers, armed and painted, and decorated with war-plumes, and sounding defiance with their conchs and drums. Ojeda again landed with fifty-seven men, whom he separated into four companies and ordered to charge the enemy from different directions. The Caribs fought for a time hand to hand, displaying great dexterity in covering themselves with their bucklers, but were at length entirely routed, and driven with great slaughter to the forests. The Spaniards had but one man killed and twenty-one wounded in these combats,—such superior advantage did their armour give them over the naked savages. Having plundered and set fire to the houses, they returned triumphantly to their ships, with a number of Carib captives; and made sail for the main-land. Ojeda bestowed a part of the spoil upon the seven Indians who had accompanied him as guides, and sent them exulting to their homes, to relate to their countrymen the signal vengeance wreaked upon their foes. He then anchored in a bay, where he remained for twenty days, until his men had recovered from their wounds.*

CHAPTER IV.

Discovery of the Gulf of Venezuela—Transactions there—Ojeda explores the Gulf—Penetrates to Maracaibo.

His crew being refreshed and the wounded sufficiently recovered, Ojeda made sail, and touched at the island of Curazao, which, according to the accounts of Vespucci, was inhabited by a race of giants, "every woman appearing a Penthesilea, and every man an Antæus."† As

* There is some discrepancy in the early accounts of this battle, as to the time and place of its occurrence. The author has collated the narratives of Vespucci, Las Casas, Herrera, and Peter Martyr, and the evidence given in the lawsuit of Diego Columbus, and has endeavoured as much as possible to reconcile them.

† Vespucci, Letter to Lorenzo de Pier Francisco de Medicis.

Vespucci was a scholar, and as he supposed himself exploring the regions of the extreme East, the ancient realm of fable, it is probable his imagination deceived him, and construed the formidable accounts given by the Indians of their cannibal neighbours of the islands, into something according with his recollections of classic fable. Certain it is that the reports of subsequent voyagers proved the inhabitants of the island to be of the ordinary size.

Proceeding along the coast, he arrived at a vast deep gulf, resembling a tranquil lake; entering which, he beheld on the eastern side a village, the construction of which struck him with surprise. It consisted of twenty large houses, shaped like bells, and built on piles driven into the bottom of the lake, which, in this part, was limpid and of but little depth. Each house was provided with a drawbridge, and with canoes by which the communication was carried on. From these resemblances to the Italian city, Ojeda gave to the bay the name of the Gulf of Venice; and it is called at the present day Venezuela, or Little Venice: the Indian name was Coquibacoa.

When the inhabitants beheld the ships standing into the bay, looking like wonderful and unknown apparitions from the deep, they fled with terror to their houses, and raised the drawbridges. The Spaniards remained for a time gazing with admiration at this amphibious village, when a squadron of canoes entered the harbour from the sea. On beholding the ships they paused in mute amazement, and on the Spaniards attempting to approach them, paddled swiftly to shore, and plunged into the forest. They soon returned with sixteen young girls, whom they conveyed in their canoes to the ships, distributing four on board of each, either as peace-offerings or as tokens of amity and confidence. The best of understanding now seemed to be established; and the inhabitants of the village came swarming about the ships in their canoes, and others swimming in great numbers from the shores.

The friendship of the savages, however, was all delusive. On a sudden several old women at the doors of the houses uttered loud shrieks, tearing their hair in fury. It appeared to be a signal for hostility. The sixteen nymphs plunged into the sea and made for shore; the Indians in the canoes caught up their bows and discharged a flight of arrows, and even those who were swimming brandished darts and lances, which they had hitherto concealed beneath the water.

Ojeda was for a moment surprised at seeing war thus

starting up on every side, and the very sea bristling with weapons. Manning his boats, he charged amongst the thickest of the enemy, shattered and sunk several of their canoes, killed twenty Indians and wounded many more, and spread such a panic among them, that most of the survivors flung themselves into the sea and swam to shore. Three of them were taken prisoners, and two of the fugitive girls, and were conveyed on board of the ships, where the men were put in irons. One of them, however, and the two girls succeeded in dextrously escaping the same night.

Ojeda had but five men wounded in the affray; all of whom recovered. He visited the houses, but found them abandoned and destitute of booty; notwithstanding the unprovoked hostility of the inhabitants, he spared the buildings, that he might not cause useless irritation along the coast.

Continuing to explore this gulf, Ojeda penetrated to a port or harbour, to which he gave the name of St. Bartholomew, but which is supposed to be the same at present known by the original Indian name of Maracaibo. Here, in compliance with the entreaties of the natives, he sent a detachment of twenty-seven Spaniards on a visit to the interior. For nine days they were conducted from town to town, and feasted and almost idolized by the Indians, who regarded them as angelic beings, performing their national dances and games, and chanting their traditional ballads for their entertainment.

The natives of this part were distinguished for the symmetry of their forms; the females in particular appeared to the Spaniards to surpass all they had yet beheld in the New World for grace and beauty. Neither did the men display in the least degree that jealousy which prevailed in the other parts of the coast; but, on the contrary, permitted the most frank and intimate intercourse with their wives and daughters.

By the time the Spaniards set out on their return to the ship, the whole country was aroused, pouring forth its population, male and female, to do them honour. Some bore them in litters or hammocks, that they might not be fatigued with the journey, and happy was the Indian who had the honour of bearing a Spaniard on his shoulders across a river. Others loaded themselves with the presents that had been bestowed on their guests, consisting of rich plumes, weapons of various kinds, and tropical birds and animals. In this way they returned in triumphant pro-

cession to the ships, the woods and shores resounding with their songs and shouts.

Many of the Indians crowded into the boats which took the detachment to the ships; others put off in canoes, or swam from shore, so that in a little while the vessels were thronged with upwards of a thousand wandering natives. While gazing and marvelling at the strange objects around them, Ojeda ordered the cannon to be discharged, at the sound of which, says Vespucci, the Indians "plunged into the water like so many frogs from a bank." Perceiving, however, that it was done in harmless mirth, they returned on board, and passed the rest of the day in great festivity. The Spaniards brought away with them several of the beautiful and hospitable females from this place, one of whom, named by them Isabel, was much prized by Ojeda, and accompanied him in a subsequent voyage.*

CHAPTER V.

Prosecution of the Voyage—Return to Spain.

Leaving the friendly port of Coquibacoa, Ojeda continued along the western shores of the Gulf of Venezuela, and standing out to sea, and doubling Cape Maracaibo, he pursued his coasting voyage from port to port, and promontory to promontory, of this unknown continent, until he reached that long-stretching headland called Cape de la Vela. There the state of his vessels, and perhaps the disappointment of his hopes at not meeting with abundant sources of immediate wealth, induced him to abandon all further voyaging along the coast, and changing his course, he stood across the Caribbean Sea for Hispaniola. The

* Navarrete, tom. iii. p. 8. Idem, pp. 107, 108.

It is worthy of particular mention that Ojeda, in his report of his voyage to the sovereigns, informed them of his having met with English voyagers in the vicinity of Coquibacoa, and that the Spanish Government attached such importance to his information as to take measures to prevent any intrusion into those parts by the English. It is singular that no record should exist of this early and extensive expedition of English navigators. If it was undertaken in the service of the Crown, some document might be found concerning it among the archives of the reign of Henry VII. The English had already discovered the continent of North America. This had been done in 1497, by John Cabot, a Venetian, accompanied by his son Sebastian, who was born in Bristol. They sailed under a license of Henry VII., who was to have a fifth of the profits of the voyage. On the 24th June they discovered Newfoundland, and afterwards coasted the continent quite to Florida, bringing back to England a valuable cargo and several of the natives. This was the first discovery of the mainland of America. The success of this expedition may have prompted the one which Ojeda encountered in the neighbourhood of Coquibacoa.

tenor of his commission forbade his visiting that island; but Ojeda was not a man to stand upon trifles when his interest or inclination prompted the contrary. He trusted to excuse the infraction of his orders by the alleged necessity of touching at the island to calk and refit his vessels, and to procure provisions. His true object, however, is supposed to have been to cut dye-wood, which abounds in the western part of Hispaniola.

He accordingly anchored at Yaquimo in September, and landed with a large party of his men. Columbus at that time held command of the island, and, hearing of this unlicensed intrusion, despatched Francisco Roldan, the quondam rebel, to call Ojeda to account. The contest of stratagem and management which took place between these two adroit and daring adventurers, has been already detailed in the History of Columbus. Roldan was eventually successful, and Ojeda, being obliged to leave Hispaniola, resumed his rambling voyage, visiting various islands, from whence he carried off numbers of the natives. He at length arrived at Cadiz in June, 1500, with his ships crowded with captives, whom he sold as slaves. So meagre, however, was the result of this expedition, that we are told, when all the expenses were deducted, but five hundred ducats remained to be divided between fifty-five adventurers. What made this result the more mortifying was, that a petty armament, which had sailed some time after that of Ojeda, had returned two months before him, rich with the spoils of the New World. A brief account of this latter expedition is necessary to connect this series of minor discoveries, which will be found to lead to enterprises and transactions of more stirring interest and importance.

PEDRO ALONZO NIÑO* AND CHRISTOVAL GUERRA.

[1499.]

The permission granted by Bishop Fonseca to Alonzo de Ojeda to undertake a private expedition to the New World, roused the emulation of others of the followers of Columbus. Among these was Pedro Alonzo Niño, a hardy sea-

* Pronounced Ninyo. The Ñ in Spanish is always pronounced as if followed by the letter *y*.

man, native of Moguer, in the vicinity of Palos, who had sailed with Columbus, as a pilot, in his first voyage, and also in his cruisings along the coasts of Cuba and Paria.* He soon obtained from the bishop a similar license to that given to Ojeda, and like the latter, sought for some moneyed confederate among the rich merchants of Seville. One of these, named Luis Guerra, offered to fit out a caravel for the expedition; but on condition that his brother, Christoval Guerra, should have the command. The poverty of Niño compelled him to assent to the stipulations of the man of wealth, and he sailed as subaltern in his own enterprise; but his nautical skill and knowledge soon gained him the ascendancy; he became virtually the captain, and ultimately enjoyed the whole credit of the voyage.

The bark of these two adventurers was but of fifty tons burthen, and the crew thirty-three souls, all told. With this slender armament they undertook to traverse unknown and dangerous seas, and to explore the barbarous shores of that vast continent recently discovered by Columbus;—such was the daring spirit of the Spanish voyagers of those days.

It was about the beginning of June, 1499, and but a few days after the departure of Ojeda, that they put to sea. They sailed from the little port of Palos, the cradle of American discovery, whose brave and skilful mariners long continued foremost in all enterprises to the New World. Being guided by the chart of Columbus, they followed his route, and reached the southern continent, a little beyond Paria, about fifteen days after the same coast had been visited by Ojeda.

They then proceeded to the Gulf of Paria, where they landed to cut dye-wood, and were amicably entertained by the natives. Shortly afterwards, sallying from the gulf by the Boca del Drago, they encountered eighteen canoes of Caribs, the pirate rovers of these seas, and the terror of the bordering lands. This savage armada, instead of being daunted, as usual, by the sight of a European ship, with swelling sails, resembling some winged monster of the deep, considered it only as an object of plunder or hostility, and assailed it with showers of arrows. The sudden burst of artillery, however, from the sides of the caravel, and the havoc made by this seeming thunder, struck them with dismay, and they fled in all directions. The Spaniards succeeded in capturing one of the canoes, with one of the warriors who had

* Testimony of Bastides in the lawsuit of Diego Columbus.

manned it. In the bottom of the canoe lay an Indian prisoner, bound hand and foot. On being liberated, he informed the Spaniards, by signs, that these Caribs had been on a marauding expedition along the neighbouring coasts, shutting themselves up at night in a stockade which they carried with them, and issuing forth by day to plunder the villages and make captives. He had been one of seven prisoners; his companions had been devoured before his eyes at the cannibal banquets of these savages, and he had been awaiting the same miserable fate. Honest Niño and his confederates were so indignant at this recital, that, receiving it as established fact, they performed what they considered an act of equitable justice, by abandoning the Carib to the discretion of his late captive. The latter fell upon the defenceless warrior with fist, and foot, and cudgel; nor did his rage subside even after the breath had been mauled out of his victim, but, tearing the grim head from the body, he placed it on a pole, as a trophy of his vengeance.

Niño and his fellow-adventurers now steered for the island of Margarita, where they obtained a considerable quantity of pearls by barter. They afterwards skirted the opposite coast of Cumana, trading cautiously and shrewdly, from port to port; sometimes remaining on board of their little bark, and obliging the savages to come off to them, when the latter appeared too numerous; at other times venturing on shore, and even into the interior. They were invariably treated with amity by the natives, who were perfectly naked, excepting that they were adorned with necklaces and bracelets of pearls. These they sometimes gave freely to the Spaniards, at other times they exchanged them for glass beads and other trinkets, and smiled at the folly of the strangers in making such silly bargains.*

The Spaniards were struck with the grandeur and density of the forests along this coast; for in these regions of heat and moisture vegetation appears in its utmost magnificence. They heard also the cries and roarings of wild and unknown animals in the woodlands, which, however, appeared not to be very dangerous, as the Indians went about the forest armed solely with bows, and arrows. From meeting with deer and rabbits, they were convinced that that was a part of Terra Firma, not having found any animals of the kind on the islands.†

* Las Casas, Hist. Ind., lib. i. cap. 171.
† Navarrete, tom. iii. p. 14.

Niño and Guerra were so well pleased with the hospitality of the natives of Cumana, and with the profitable traffic for pearls, by which they obtained many of great size and beauty, that they remained upwards of three months on the coast.

They then proceeded westward to a country called Cauchieto, trading, as usual, for pearls, and for the inferior kind of gold called guanin. At length they arrived at a number of houses and gardens situated on a river and protected by a kind of fortress, the whole forming, to the eyes of the Spaniards, one of the most delicious abodes imaginable. They were about to land and enjoy the pleasures of this fancied Paradise, when they beheld upwards of a thousand Indians, armed with bows and arrows and war-clubs, preparing to give them a warm reception; having been probably incensed by the recent visit of Ojeda. As Niño and Guerra had not the fighting propensities of Ojeda, and were in quest of profit rather than renown, having moreover, in all probability, the fear of the rich merchant of Seville before their eyes, they prudently abstained from landing, and, abandoning this hostile coast, returned forthwith to Cumana, to resume their trade for pearls. They soon amassed a great number, many of which were equal in size and beauty to the most celebrated of the east, though they had been injured in boring from a want of proper implements.

Satisfied with their success, they now set sail for Spain, and piloted their little bark safely to Bayonne in Gallicia, where they anchored about the middle of April, 1500, nearly two months before the arrival of Ojeda and his associates, La Cosa and Vespucci.*

The most successful voyagers to the New World were doomed to trouble from their very success. The ample amount of pearls paid to the treasury, as the royal portion of the profits of this expedition, drew suspicion instead of favour upon the two adventurers. They were accused of having concealed a great part of the pearls collected by them, thus defrauding their companions and the crown. Pedro Alonzo Niño was actually thrown into prison on this accusation, but, nothing being proved against him, he was eventually set free, and enjoyed the enviable reputation of having performed the richest voyage that had yet been made to the New World.†

* Peter Martyr. Other historians give a different date for their arrival. Herrera says Feb. 6.

† Navarrete, Colec., tom. iii. p. 11. Herrera, decad. i. lib. iv. cap. 5.

VICENTE YAÑEZ PINZON.

[1499.]

Among the maritime adventurers of renown who were roused to action by the licenses granted for private expeditions of discovery, we find conspicuous the name of Vicente Yañez Pinzon of Palos, one of the three brave brothers who aided Columbus in his first voyage, and risked life and fortune with him in his doubtful and perilous enterprise.

Of Martin Alonzo Pinzon, the eldest and most important of these three brothers, particular mention has been made in the History of Columbus, and of the unfortunate error in conduct which severed him from the admiral, brought on him the displeasure of the sovereigns, and probably contributed to his premature and melancholy death.

Whatever cloud this may have thrown over his family, it was but temporary. The death of Martin Alonzo, as usual, atoned for his faults, and his good deeds lived after him. The merits and services of himself and his brothers were acknowledged, and the survivors of the family were restored to royal confidence. A feeling of jealous hostility prevented them from taking a part in the subsequent voyages of Columbus; but the moment the door was thrown open for individual enterprise, they pressed forward for permission to engage in it at their own risk and expense—and it was readily granted. In fact, their supposed hostility to Columbus was one of the surest recommendations to the favour of the Bishop Fonseca, by whom the license was issued for their expedition.

Vicente Yañez Pinzon was the leader of this new enterprise, and he was accompanied by two nephews, Arias Perez and Diego Fernandez, sons of his late brother Martin Alonzo Pinzon. Several of his sailors had sailed with Columbus in his recent voyage to Paria, as had also his three principal pilots, Juan Quintero, Juan de Umbria, and Juan de Jerez. Thus these minor voyages seemed all to emanate from the great expeditions of Columbus, and to aim at realizing the ideas and speculations contained in the papers transmitted by him to Spain.

The armament consisted of four caravels, and was fitted out at the port of Palos. The funds of Vicente Yañez were completely exhausted before he had fitted out his little squadron; he was obliged therefore to purchase on

credit the sea-stores and articles of traffic necessary for the enterprise. The merchants of Palos seem to have known how to profit by the careless nature of sailors and the sanguine spirit of discoverers. In their bargains they charged honest Pinzon eighty and a hundred per cent. above the market value of their merchandise, and in the hurry and urgency of the moment he was obliged to submit to the imposition.*

The squadron put to sea in the beginning of December, 1499, and after passing the Canary and Cape de Verde Islands, stood to the south-west. Having sailed about seven hundred leagues, they crossed the equator and lost sight of the north star. They had scarcely passed the equinoctial line when they encountered a terrible tempest, which had well nigh swallowed up their slender barks. The storm passed away, and the firmament was again serene; but the mariners remained tossing about in confusion, dismayed by the turbulence of the waves and the strange aspect of the heavens. They looked in vain to the south for some polar star by which to shape their course, and fancied that some swelling prominence of the globe concealed it from their view. They knew nothing as yet of the firmament of that hemisphere, nor of that beautiful constellation the southern cross, but expected to find a guiding star at the opposite pole, similar to the cynosure of the north.

Pinzon, however, who was of an intrepid spirit, pursued his course resolutely to the west, and after sailing about two hundred and forty leagues, and being in the eighth degree of southern latitude, he beheld land afar off on the 28th of January, to which he gave the name of *Santa Maria de la Consolacion*, from the sight of it having consoled him in the midst of doubts and perplexities. It is now called Cape St. Augustine, and forms the most prominent part of the immense empire of Brazil.

The sea was turbid and discoloured as in rivers, and on sounding they had sixteen fathoms water. Pinzon landed, accompanied by a notary and witnesses, and took formal possession of the territory for the Castilian crown; no one appeared to dispute his pretensions, but he observed on the beach the print of footsteps, of gigantic size.

At night there were fires lighted upon a neighbouring part of the coast, which induced Pinzon on the following morning to send forty men well armed to the spot. A

* Navarrete, vol. iii. See Doc. No. 7, where Vicente Yanez Pinzon petitions for redress.

band of Indians, of about equal number, sallied forth to encounter them, armed with bows and arrows, and seemingly of extraordinary stature. A still greater number were seen in the distance, hastening to the support of their companions. The Indians arrayed themselves for combat, and the two parties remained for a short time eyeing each other with mutual curiosity and distrust. The Spaniards now displayed looking-glasses, beads, and other trinkets, and jingled strings of hawks'-bells, in general so captivating to an Indian ear; but the haughty savages treated all their overtures with contempt, regarding these offerings carelessly for a short time, and then stalking off with stoic gravity. They were ferocious of feature, and apparently warlike in disposition, and are supposed to have been a wandering race of unusual size, who roamed about in the night, and were of the most fierce untractable nature. By nightfall there was not an Indian to be seen in the neighbourhood.

Discouraged by the inhospitable character of the coast, Pinzon made sail and stood to the north-west, until he came to the mouth of a river too shallow to receive his ships. Here he sent his boats on shore with a number of men well armed. They landed on the river banks, and beheld a multitude of naked Indians on a neighbouring hill. A single Spaniard, armed simply with sword and buckler, was sent to invite them to friendly intercourse. He approached them with signs of amity, and threw to them a hawk's-bell. They replied to him with similar signs, and threw to him a small gilded wand. The soldier stooped to pick it up, when suddenly a troop of savages rushed down to seize him; he threw himself immediately upon the defensive, with sword and target, and though but a small man, and far from robust, handled his weapons with such dexterity and fierceness, that he kept the savages at bay, making a clear circle round him, and wounding several who attempted to break it. His unlooked-for prowess surprised and confounded his assailants, and gave time for his comrades to come to his assistance. The Indians then made a general assault, with such a galling discharge of darts and arrows that almost immediately eight or ten Spaniards were slain, and many more wounded. The latter were compelled to retreat to their boats disputing every inch of ground. The Indians pursued them even into the water, surrounding the boats and seizing hold of the oars. The Spaniards made a desperate defence, thrusting many through with their lances, and cutting down and ripping

up others with their swords, but such was the ferocity of the survivors, that they persisted in their attack until they overpowered the crew of one of the boats, and bore it off in triumph. With this they retired from the combat, and the Spaniards returned defeated and disheartened to their ships, having met with the roughest reception that the Europeans had yet experienced in the New World.

Pinzon now stood forty leagues to the north-west, until he arrived in the neighbourhood of the equinoctial line. Here he found the water of the sea so fresh that he was enabled to replenish his casks with it. Astonished at so singular a phenomenon, he stood in for the land, and arrived among a number of fresh and verdant islands, inhabited by a gentle and hospitable race of people, gayly painted, who came off to the ships with the most frank and fearless confidence. Pinzon soon found that these islands lay in the mouth of an immense river, more than thirty leagues in breadth, the water of which entered upwards of forty leagues into the sea before losing its sweetness. It was, in fact, the renowned Marañon, since known as the Orellana and the Amazon. While lying in the mouth of this river, there was a sudden swelling of the stream, which, being opposed by the current of the sea, and straitened by the narrow channels of the islands, rose more than five fathoms, with mountain waves, and a tremendous noise, threatening the destruction of the ships. Pinzon extricated his little squadron with great difficulty, and finding there was but little gold, nor anything else of value to be found among the simple natives, he requited their hospitality, in the mode too common among the early discoverers, by carrying off thirty-six of them captive.

Having regained the sight of the polar star, Pinzon pursued his course along the coast, passing the mouths of the Oronoko, and entering the Gulf of Paria, where he landed and cut brazil-wood. Sallying forth by the Boca del Drago, he reached the island of Hispaniola about the 23rd of June, whence he sailed for the Bahamas. Here, in the month of July, while at anchor, there came such a tremendous hurricane that two of the caravels were swallowed up with all their crews in the sight of their terrified companions; a third parted her cables and was driven out to sea, while the fourth was so furiously beaten by the tempest that the crew threw themselves into the boats and made for shore. Here they found a few naked Indians, who offered them no molestation; but, fearing that they might spread the tidings of a handful of ship-

wrecked Spaniards being upon the coast, and thus bring the savages of the neighbouring islands upon them, a council of war was held whether it would not be a wise precaution to put these Indians to death. Fortunately for the latter, the vessel which had been driven from her anchors returned, and put an end to the alarm, and to the council of war. The other caravel also rode out the storm uninjured, and the sea subsiding, the Spaniards returned on board, and made the best of their way to the island of Hispaniola. Having repaired the damages sustained in the gale, they again made sail for Spain, and came to anchor in the river before Palos, about the end of September.

Thus ended one of the most checkered and disastrous voyages yet made to the New World. Yañez Pinzon had lost two of his ships, and many of his men: what made the loss of the latter more grievous was, that they had been enlisted from among his neighbours, his friends, and relatives. In fact, the expeditions to the New World must have realized the terrors and apprehensions of the people of Palos by filling that little community with widows and orphans. When the rich merchants, who had sold goods to Pinzon at a hundred per cent. advance, beheld him return in this sorry condition, with two shattered barks and a handful of poor, tattered, weather-beaten seamen, they began to tremble for their money. No sooner, therefore, had he and his nephews departed to Granada, to give an account of their discoveries to the sovereigns, than the merchants seized upon their caravels and cargoes, and began to sell them, to repay themselves. Honest Pinzon immediately addressed a petition to the government, stating the imposition practised upon him, and the danger he was in of imprisonment and utter ruin, should his creditors be allowed to sacrifice his goods at a public sale. He petitioned that they might be compelled to return the property thus seized, and that he might be enabled to sell three hundred and fifty quintals of brazil-wood, which he had brought back with him, and which would be sufficient to satisfy the demands of his creditors. The sovereigns granted his prayer. They issued an order to the civil authorities of Palos to interfere in the matter, with all possible promptness and brevity, allowing no vexatious delay, and administering justice so impartially that neither of the parties should have cause to complain.

Pinzon escaped from the fangs of his creditors, but, of course, must have suffered in purse from the expenses of

the law; which, in Spain, is apt to bury even a successful client under an overwhelming mountain of documents and writings. We infer this in respect to Pinzon from a royal order issued in the following year, allowing him to export a quantity of grain, in consideration of the heavy losses he had sustained in his voyage of discovery. He did but share the usual lot of the Spanish discoverers, whose golden anticipations too frequently ended in penury; but he is distinguished from among the crowd of them by being the first European who crossed the equinoctial line, on the Western Ocean, and by discovering the great kingdom of Brazil.*

DIEGO DE LEPE AND RODRIGO DE BASTIDES.

[1500.]

NOTWITHSTANDING the hardships and disasters that had beset the voyagers to the New World, and the penury in which their golden anticipations had too frequently terminated, adventurers continued to press forward, excited by fresh reports of newly-discovered regions, each in its turn represented as the real land of promise. Scarcely had Vicente Yañez Pinzon departed on the voyage recently narrated, when his townsman Diego de Lepe likewise set

* On the 5th of September, 1501, a royal permission was given to Vicente Yanez Pinzon to colonize and govern the lands he had discovered, beginning a little north of the river Amazon, and extending to Cape St. Augustine. The object of the government in this permission was to establish an outpost and a resolute commander on this southern frontier, to check any intrusions the Portuguese might make in consequence of the accidental discovery of a part of the coast of Brazil by Pedro Alvarez Cabral, in 1500. The subsequent arrangement of a partition line between the two countries prevented the necessity of this precaution; and it does not appear that Vicente Yanez Pinzon made any second voyage to those parts.

In 1506 he undertook an expedition in company with Juan Diaz de Solis, a native of Lebrija, the object of which was to endeavour to find the strait or passage supposed by Columbus to lead from the Atlantic to a Southern Ocean. It was necessarily without success, as was also another voyage made by them, for the same purpose, in 1508. As no such passage exists, no blame could attach to those able navigators for being foiled in the object of their search.

In consequence of the distinguished merits and services of the Pinzon family, they were raised, by the Emperor Charles V. to the dignity of a Hidalguía, or nobility, without any express title, and a coat of arms was granted them, on which were emblazoned three caravels, with a hand at the stern pointing to an island covered with savages. This coat of arms is still maintained by the family, who have added to it the motto granted to Columbus, merely substituting the name of Pinzon for that of the admiral,

A Castile y a Leon,
Nuevo Mundo dio Pinzon.

sail with two vessels from the busy little port of Palos, on a like expedition. No particulars of importance are known of this voyage, excepting that Lepe doubled Cape St. Augustine, and beheld the southern continent stretching far to the south-west. On returning to Spain he drew a chart of the coast for the Bishop Fonseca, and enjoyed the reputation, for upwards of ten years afterwards, of having extended his discoveries further south than any other voyager.

Another contemporary adventurer to the New World was Rodrigo de Bastides, a wealthy notary of Triana, the suburb of Seville, inhabited by the maritime part of its population. Being sanctioned by the sovereigns, to whom he engaged to yield a fourth of his profits, he fitted out two caravels in October, 1500, to go in quest of gold and pearls.

Prudently distrusting his own judgment in nautical matters, this adventurous notary associated with him the veteran pilot Juan de la Cosa, the same hardy Biscayan who had sailed with Columbus and Ojeda. A general outline of their voyage has already been given in the life of Columbus; it extended the discoveries of the coast of Terra Firma from Cape de la Vela, where Ojeda had left off, quite to the port of Nombre de Dios.

Bastides distinguished himself from the mass of discoverers by his kind treatment of the natives, and Juan de la Cosa by his sound discretion and his able seamanship. Their voyage had been extremely successful, and they had collected, by barter, a great amount of gold and pearls, when their prosperous career was checked by an unlooked-for evil. Their vessels, to their surprise, became leaky in every part, and they discovered, to their dismay, that the bottoms were pierced in innumerable places by the broma, or worm, which abounds in the waters of the torrid zone, but of which they, as yet, had scarcely any knowledge. It was with great difficulty they could keep afloat until they reached a small islet on the coast of Hispaniola. Here they repaired their ships as well as they were able, and again put to sea to return to Cadiz. A succession of gales drove them back to port; the ravages of the worms continued, the leaks broke out afresh; they landed the most portable and precious part of their wealthy cargoes, and the vessels foundered with the remainder. Bastides lost, moreover, the arms and ammunition saved from the wreck, being obliged to destroy them lest they should fall into the hands of the Indians.

Distributing his men into three bands, two of them headed by La Cosa and himself, they set off for San Domingo by three several routes, as the country was not able to furnish provisions for so large a body. Each band was provided with a coffer stored with trinkets and other articles of Indian traffic, with which to buy provisions on the road.

Francisco de Bobadilla, the wrong-headed oppressor and superseder of Columbus, was at that time governor of San Domingo. The report reached him that a crew of adventurers had landed on the island, and were marching through the country in three bands, each provided with a coffer of gold, and carrying on illicit trade with the natives. The moment Bastides made his appearance, therefore, he was seized and thrown into prison, and an investigation commenced. In his defence he maintained that his only traffic with the natives was for the purpose of procuring provisions for his followers, or guides for his journey. It was determined, however, to send him to Spain for trial, with the written testimony and the other documents of his examination.

He was accordingly conveyed in the same fleet in which Bobadilla embarked for Spain, and which experienced such an awful shipwreck in the sight of Columbus. The ship of Rodrigo Bastides was one of the few which outlived the tempest: it arrived safe at Cadiz in September, 1502. Bastides was ultimately acquitted of the charges advanced against him. So lucrative had been his voyage, that, notwithstanding the losses sustained by the foundering of his vessels, he was enabled to pay a large sum to the crown as a fourth of his profits, and to retain a great amount for himself. In reward of his services and discoveries, the sovereigns granted him an annual revenue for life, to arise from the proceeds of the province of Uraba, which he had discovered. An equal pension was likewise assigned to the hardy Juan de la Cosa, to result from the same territory, of which he was appointed alguazil mayor.* Such was the economical generosity of King Ferdinand, who rewarded the past toils of his adventurous discoverers out of the expected produce of their future labours.

* Navarrete, Colec., tom. iii.

SECOND VOYAGE OF ALONZO DE OJEDA.

[1502.]

The first voyage of Alonzo de Ojeda to the coast of Paria, and its meagre termination in June, 1500, has been related. He gained nothing in wealth by that expedition, but he added to his celebrity as a bold and skilful adventurer. His youthful fire, his sanguine and swelling spirit, and the wonderful stories told of his activity and prowess, made him extremely popular, so that his patron the Bishop Fonseca found it an easy matter to secure for him the royal favour. In consideration of his past services and of others expected from him, a grant was made to him of six leagues of land on the southern part of Hispaniola, and the government of the province of Coquibacoa which he had discovered. He was, furthermore, authorized to fit out any number of ships, not exceeding ten, at his own expense, and to prosecute the discovery of the coast of Terra Firma. He was not to touch or traffic on the pearl coast of Paria; extending as far as a bay in the vicinity of the island of Margarita. Beyond this he had a right to trade in all kinds of merchandise, whether of pearls, jewels, metals, or precious stones; paying one-fifth of the profits to the crown, and abstaining from making slaves of the Indians without a special license from the sovereigns. He was to colonize Coquibacoa, and, as a recompense, was to enjoy one-half of the proceeds of his territory, provided the half did not exceed 300,000 maravedies; all beyond that amount was to go to the crown.

A principal reason, however, for granting this government and those privileges to Ojeda, was that, in his previous voyage, he had met with English adventurers on a Voyage of Discovery in the neighbourhood of Coquibacoa, at which the jealousy of the sovereigns had taken the alarm. They were anxious, therefore, to establish a resolute and fighting commander like Ojeda upon this outpost, and they instructed him to set up the arms of Castile and Leon in every place he visited, as a signal of discovery and possession, and to put a stop to the intrusions of the English.*

With this commission in his pocket, and the government of an Indian territory in the perspective, Ojeda soon found associates to aid him in fitting out an armament. These

* Navarrete, tom. iii. Document x.

were Juan de Vergara, a servant of a rich canon of the cathedral of Seville, and Garcia de Campos, commonly called Ocampo. They made a contract of partnership to last for two years, according to which the expenses and profits of the expedition, and of the government of Coquibacoa, were to be shared equally between them. The purses of the confederates were not ample enough to afford ten ships, but they fitted out four. 1st, the *Santa Maria de la Antigua*, commanded by Garcia del Campo; 2nd, the *Santa Maria de la Granada*, commanded by Juan de Vergara; 3rd, the caravel *Magdalena*, commanded by Pedro de Ojeda, nephew to Alonzo; and 4th, the caravel *Santa Ana*, commanded by Hernando de Guevara. The whole was under the command of Alonzo de Ojeda. The expedition set sail in 1502, touched at the Canaries, according to custom, to take in provisions, and then proceeded westward for the shores of the New World.

After traversing the Gulf of Paria, and before reaching the island of Margarita, the caravel *Santa Ana*, commanded by Hernan de Guevara, was separated from them, and for several days the ships were mutually seeking each other in these silent and trackless seas. After they were all reunited, they found their provisions growing scanty, they landed therefore at a part of the coast called Cumana by the natives, but to which, from its beauty and fertility, Ojeda gave the name of Valfermoso. While foraging here for their immediate supplies, the idea occurred to Ojeda that he should want furniture and utensils of all kinds for his proposed colony, and that it would be better to pillage them from a country where he was a mere transient visitor, than to wrest them from his neighbours in the territory where he was to set up his government. His companions were struck with the policy, if not the justice, of this idea, and they all set to work to carry it into execution. Dispersing themselves, therefore, in ambush in various directions, they at a concerted signal rushed forth from their concealment, and set upon the natives. Ojeda had issued orders to do as little injury and damage as possible, and on no account to destroy the habitations of the Indians. His followers, however, in their great zeal, transcended his orders. Seven or eight Indians were killed and many wounded in the skirmish which took place, and a number of their cabins were wrapped in flames. A great quantity of hammocks, of cotton, and of utensils of various kinds, fell into the hands of the conquerors; they also captured several female Indians, some of whom were ransomed

with the kind of gold called guanin; some were retained by Vergara for himself and his friend Ocampo, others were distributed among the crews, the rest, probably the old and ugly, were set at liberty. As to Ojeda, he reserved nothing for himself of the spoil, excepting a single hammock.

The ransom paid by the poor Indians for some of their effects and some of their women, yielded the Spaniards a trifling quantity of gold, but they found the place destitute of provisions, and Ojeda was obliged to despatch Vergara in a caravel to the island of Jamaica to forage for supplies, with instructions to rejoin him at Maracaibo or Cape de la Vela.

Ojeda at length arrived at Coquibacoa, at the port destined for his seat of government. He found the country, however, so poor and sterile, that he proceeded along the coast to a bay which he named Santa Cruz, but which is supposed to be the same at present called Bahia Honda, where he found a Spaniard who had been left in the province of Citarma by Bastides, in his late voyage about thirteen months before, and had remained ever since among the Indians, so that he had acquired their language.

Ojeda determined to form his settlement at this place; but the natives seemed disposed to defend their territory, for, the moment a party landed to procure water, they were assailed by a galling shower of arrows, and driven back to the ships. Upon this Ojeda landed with all his force, and struck such terror into the Indians, that they came forward with signs of amity, and brought a considerable quantity of gold as a peace-offering, which was graciously accepted.

Ojeda, with the concurrence of his associates, now set to work to establish a settlement, cutting down trees, and commencing a fortress. They had scarce begun, when they were attacked by a neighbouring cacique, but Ojeda sallied forth upon him with such intrepidity and effect as not merely to defeat but to drive him from the neighbourhood. He then proceeded quietly to finish his fortress, which was defended by lombards, and contained the magazine of provisions, and the treasure amassed in the expedition. The provisions were dealt out twice a day, under the inspection of proper officers; the treasure, gained by barter, by ransom, or by plunder, was deposited in a strong box secured by two locks, one key being kept by the royal supervisor, the other by Ocampo.

In the meantime provisions became scarce. The Indians

never appeared in the neighbourhood of the fortress, except to harass it with repeated though ineffectual assaults. Vergara did not appear with the expected supplies from Jamaica, and a caravel was despatched in search of him. The people, worn out with labour and privations of various kinds, and disgusted with the situation of the settlement, which was in a poor and unhealthy country, grew discontented and factious. They began to fear that they should lose the means of departing, as their vessels were in danger of being destroyed by the broma or worms. Ojeda led them forth repeatedly upon foraging parties about the adjacent country, and collected some provisions and booty in the Indian villages. The provisions he deposited in the magazine, part of the spoils he divided among his followers, and the gold he locked up in the strong box, the keys of which he took possession of, to the great displeasure of the supervisor and his associate Ocampo. The murmurs of the people grew loud as their sufferings increased. They insinuated that Ojeda had no authority over this part of the coast, having passed the boundaries of his government, and formed his settlement in the country discovered by Bastides. By the time Vergara arrived from Jamaica, the factions of this petty colony had risen to an alarming height. Ocampo had a personal enmity to the governor, arising probably from some feud about the strong box; being a particular friend of Vergara, he held a private conference with him, and laid a plan to entrap the doughty Ojeda. In pursuance of this, the latter was invited on board of the caravel of Vergara, to see the provisions he had brought from Jamaica; but no sooner was he on board than they charged him with having transgressed the limits of his government, with having provoked the hostility of the Indians and heedlessly sacrificed the lives of his followers, and above all with having taken possession of the strong box, in contempt of the authority of the royal supervisor, and with the intention of appropriating to himself all the gains of the enterprise; they informed him, therefore, of their intention to convey him a prisoner to Hispaniola, to answer to the governor for his offences. Ojeda, finding himself thus entrapped, proposed to Vergara and Ocampo that they should return to Spain with such of the crews as chose to accompany them, leaving him with the remainder to prosecute his enterprise. The two recreant partners at first consented, for they were disgusted with the enterprise, which offered little profit and severe hardships. They agreed to leave

Ojeda the smallest of the caravels with a third of the provisions and of their gains, and to build a row-boat for him. They actually began to labour upon the boat. Before ten days had elapsed, however, they repented of their arrangement, the ship-carpenters were ill, there were no caulkers, and moreover they recollected that as Ojeda, according to their representations, was a defaulter to the crown, they would be liable as his sureties, should they return to Spain without him. They concluded, therefore, that the wisest plan was to give him nothing, but to carry him off prisoner.

When Ojeda learned the determination of his wary partners, he attempted to make his escape and get off to San Domingo, but he was seized, thrown in irons, and conveyed on board of the caravel. The two partners then set sail from Santa Cruz, bearing off the whole community, its captive governor, and the litigated strong box.

They put to sea about the beginning of September, and arrived at the western part of the island of Hispaniola. While at anchor, within a stone's throw of the land, Ojeda, confident in his strength and skill as a swimmer, let himself quietly slide down the side of the ship into the water during the night, and attempted to swim for the shore. His arms were free, but his feet were shackled, and the weight of his irons threatened to sink him. He was obliged to shout for help; a boat was sent from the vessel to his relief, and the unfortunate governor was brought back half drowned to his unrelenting partners.*

The latter now landed and delivered their prisoner into the hands of Gallego, the commander of the place, to be put at the disposal of the governor of the island. In the meantime the strong box, which appears to have been at the bottom of all these feuds, remained in the possession of Vergara and Ocampo, who, Ojeda says, took from it whatever they thought proper, without regard to the royal dues, or the consent of the royal supervisor. They were all together, prisoner and accusers, in the city of San Domingo, about the end of September, 1502, when the chief judge of the island, after hearing both parties, gave a verdict against Ojeda, that stripped him of all his effects, and brought him into debt to the crown for the royal proportion of the profits of the voyage. Ojeda appealed to the sovereign, and, after some time, was honourably acquitted, by the royal council, from all the charges; and a

* Hist. Gen. de Viages. Herrera, Hist. Ind.

mandate was issued in 1503, ordering a restitution of his property. It appears, however, that the costs of justice, or rather of the law, consumed his share of the treasure of the strong box, and that a royal order was necessary to liberate him from the hands of the governor; so that, like too many other litigants, he finally emerged from the labyrinths of the law a triumphant client, but a ruined man.

THIRD VOYAGE OF ALONZO DE OJEDA.

CHAPTER I.

Ojeda applies for a Command—Has a Rival Candidate in Diego de Nicuesa —His Success.

For several years after his ruinous, though successful lawsuit, we lose all traces of Alonzo de Ojeda, excepting that we are told he made another voyage to the vicinity of Coquibacoa in 1505. No record remains of this expedition, which seems to have been equally unprofitable with the preceding, for we find him in 1508, in the island of Hispaniola, as poor in purse, though as proud in spirit, as ever. In fact, however fortune might have favoured him, he had a heedless, squandering disposition that would always have kept him poor.

About this time the cupidity of King Ferdinand was greatly excited by the accounts given by Columbus of the gold-mines of Veragua, in which the admiral fancied he had discovered the Aurea Chersonesus of the ancients, whence King Solomon procured the gold used in building the temple of Jerusalem. Subsequent voyagers had corroborated the opinion of Columbus as to the general riches of the coast of Terra Firma; King Ferdinand resolved, therefore, to found regular colonies along that coast, and to place the whole under some capable commander. A project of the kind had been conceived by Columbus, when he discovered that region in the course of his last voyage, and the reader may remember the disasters experienced by his brother Don Bartholomew and himself, in endeavouring to establish a colony on the hostile shores of Veragua. The admiral being dead, the person who should naturally have presented himself to the mind of the sovereign for this particular service was Don Bartholomew; but the wary and selfish monarch

knew the Adelantado to be as lofty in his terms as his late brother, and preferred to accomplish his purposes by cheaper agents. He was unwilling also to increase the consequence of a family, whose vast but just claims were already a cause of repining to his sordid and jealous spirit. He looked round, therefore, among the crowd of adventurers, who had sprung up in the school of Columbus, for some individual ready to serve him on more accommodating terms. Among those, considered by their friends as most fitted for this purpose, was Alonzo de Ojeda, for his roving voyages and daring exploits had made him famous among the voyagers; and it was thought that an application on his part would be attended with success, as he possessed a stanch friend at court in the Bishop Fonseca. Unfortunately he was too far distant to urge his suit to the bishop, and what was worse, he was destitute of money. At this juncture there happened to be at Hispaniola the veteran navigator and pilot, Juan de la Cosa, who was a kind of Nestor in all nautical affairs.* The hardy Biscayan had sailed with Ojeda, and had conceived a great opinion of the courage and talents of the youthful adventurer. He had contrived also to fill his purse in the course of his cruising, and now, in the generous spirit of a sailor, offered to aid Ojeda with it in the prosecution of his wishes.

His offer was gladly accepted; it was agreed that Juan de la Cosa should depart for Spain, to promote the appointment of Ojeda to the command of Terra Firma, and, in case of success, should fit out, with his own funds, the necessary armament.

La Cosa departed on his embassy; he called on the Bishop Fonseca, who, as had been expected, entered warmly into the views of his favourite Ojeda, and recommended him to the ambitious and bigot king, as a man well fitted to promote his empire in the wilderness, and to dispense the blessings of Christianity among the savages.

The recommendation of the bishop was usually effec-

* Peter Martyr gives the following weighty testimony to the knowledge and skill of this excellent seaman:—"Of the Spaniards, as many as thought themselves to have any knowledge of what pertained to measure the land and sea, drew cardes (charts) on parchment as concerning these navigations. Of all others they most esteem them which Juan de la Cosa, the companion of Ojeda, and another pilot, called Andres Morales, had set forth, and this, as well for the great experience which both had (*to whom these tracks were as well known as the chambers of their own house*), as also that they were thought to be cunninger in that part of cosmography which teacheth the description and measuring of the sea."—P. Martyr, decad. ii. cap. 10.

tual in the affairs of the New World, and the opinion of the veteran De la Cosa had great weight even with the sovereign: but a rival candidate to Ojeda had presented himself, and one who had the advantage of higher connections and greater pecuniary means. This was Diego de Nicuesa, an accomplished courtier of noble birth, who had filled the post of grand carver to Don Enrique Enriquez, uncle of the king. Nature, education, and habit combined to form Nicuesa a complete rival of Ojeda. Like him, he was small of stature, but remarkable for symmetry and compactness of form, and for bodily strength and activity; like him, he was master at all kinds of weapons, and skilled, not merely in feats of agility, but in those graceful and chivalrous exercises, which the Spanish cavaliers of those days inherited from the Moors; being noted for his vigour and address in the jousts or tilting-matches after the Moresco fashion. Ojeda himself could not surpass him in feats of horsemanship, and particular mention is made of a favourite mare, which he could make caper and caracole in strict cadence to the sound of a viol: besides all this, he was versed in the legendary ballads or romances of his country, and was renowned as a capital performer on the guitar! Such were the qualifications of this candidate for a command in the wilderness, as enumerated by the reverend Bishop Las Casas. It is probable, however, that he had given evidence of qualities more adapted to the desired post; having already been out to Hispaniola in the military train of the late Governor Ovando.

Where merits were so singularly balanced as those of Ojeda and Nicuesa, it might have been difficult to decide; King Ferdinand avoided the dilemma by favouring both; not indeed by furnishing them with ships and money, but by granting patents and dignities which cost nothing, and might bring rich returns. He divided that part of the continent which lies along the Isthmus of Darien into two provinces, the boundary-line running through the Gulf of Uraba. The eastern part, extending to Cape de la Vela, was called New Andalusia, and the government of it given to Ojeda. The other to the west, including Veragua, and reaching to Cape Gracias à Dios, was assigned to Nicuesa. The island of Jamaica was given to the two governors in common, as a place whence to draw supplies of provisions. Each of the governors was to erect two fortresses in his district, and to enjoy for ten years the profits of all the mines he should discover, paying to the crown one-tenth

part the first year, one-ninth the second, one-eighth the third, one-seventh the fourth, and one-fifth in each of the remaining years.

Juan de la Cosa, who had been indefatigable in promoting the suit of Ojeda, was appointed his lieutenant in the government, with the post of alguazil mayor of the province. He immediately freighted a ship and two brigantines, in which he embarked with about two hundred men. It was a slender armament; but the purse of the honest voyager was not very deep, and that of Ojeda was empty. Nicuesa, having ampler means, armed four large vessels and two brigantines, furnished them with abundant munitions and supplies, both for the voyage and the projected colony, enlisted a much greater force, and set sail in gay and vaunting style, for the golden shores of Veragua, the Aurea Chersonesus of his imagination.

CHAPTER II.

Feud between the Rival Governors Ojeda and Nicuesa—A Challenge.

[1509.]

The two rival armaments arrived at San Domingo about the same time. Nicuesa had experienced what was doubtless considered a pleasant little turn of fortune by the way. Touching at Santa Cruz, one of the Caribbee islands, he had succeeded in capturing a hundred of the natives, whom he had borne off in his ships to be sold as slaves at Hispaniola. This was deemed justifiable in those days, even by the most scrupulous divines, from the belief that the Caribs were all anthropophagi, or man-eaters; fortunately the opinion of mankind, in this more enlightened age, makes but little difference in atrocity between the cannibal and the kidnapper.

Alonzo de Ojeda welcomed with joy the arrival of his nautical friend and future lieutenant in the government, the worthy Juan de la Cosa; still he could not but feel some mortification at the inferiority of his armament to that of his rival Nicuesa, whose stately ships rode proudly at anchor in the harbour of San Domingo. He felt, too, that his means were inadequate to the establishment of his intended colony. Ojeda, however, was not long at a loss for pecuniary assistance. Like many free-spirited men, who are careless and squandering of their own purses, he had a facility at commanding the

purses of his neighbours. Among the motley population of San Domingo, there was a lawyer of some abilities, the bachelor Martin Fernandez de Enciso, who had made two thousand castillanos by his pleading;* for it would appear that the spirit of litigation was one of the first fruits of civilized life transplanted to the New World, and flourished surprisingly among the Spanish colonists.

Alonzo de Ojeda became acquainted with the Bachelor, and finding him to be of a restless and speculative character, soon succeeded in inspiring him with a contempt for the dull but secure and profitable routine of his office in San Domingo, and imbuing him with his own passion for adventure. Above all, he dazzled him with the offer to make him alcalde mayor, or chief judge of the provincial government he was about to establish in the wilderness.

In an evil hour the aspiring Bachelor yielded to the temptation, and agreed to invest all his money in the enterprise. It was arranged that Ojeda should depart with the armament which had arrived from Spain, while the Bachelor should remain at Hispaniola to beat up for recruits and provide supplies; with these he was to embark in a ship purchased by himself, and proceed to join his high-mettled friend at the seat of his intended colony. Two rival governors, so well matched as Ojeda and Nicuesa, and both possessed of swelling spirits, pent up in small but active bodies, could not remain long in a little place like San Domingo without some collision. The island of Jamaica, which had been assigned to them in common, furnished the first ground of contention; the province of Darien furnished another, each pretending to include it within the limits of his jurisdiction. Their disputes on these points ran so high that the whole place resounded with them. In talking, however, Nicuesa had the advantage; having been brought up in the court, he was more polished and ceremonious, had greater self-command, and probably perplexed his rival governor in argument. Ojeda was no great casuist, but he was an excellent swordsman, and always ready to fight his way through any question of right or dignity which he could not clearly argue with the tongue; so he proposed to settle the dispute by single combat. Nicuesa, though equally brave, was more a man of the world, and saw the folly of such arbitrament. Secretly smiling at the heat of his antagonist, he proposed as a preliminary to the duel, and to furnish something worth fighting for, that each should deposit five

* Equivalent to 10,050 dollars of the present day.

thousand castillanos, to be the prize of the victor. This, as he foresaw, was a temporary check upon the fiery valour of his rival, who did not possess a pistole in his treasury; but probably was too proud to confess it.

It is not likely, however, that the impetuous spirit of Ojeda would long have remained in check, had not the discreet Juan de la Cosa interposed to calm it. It is interesting to notice the great ascendancy possessed by this veteran navigator over his fiery associate. Juan de la Cosa was a man whose strong natural good sense had been quickened by long and hard experience; whose courage was above all question, but tempered by time and trial. He seems to have been personally attached to Ojeda, as veterans who have outlived the rash impulse of youthful valour, are apt to love the fiery quality in their younger associates. So long as he accompanied Ojeda in his enterprises he stood by him as a Mentor in council, and a devoted partisan in danger.

In the present instance the interference of this veteran of the seas had the most salutary effect: he prevented the impending duel of the rival governors, and persuaded them to agree that the river Darien should be the boundary-line between their respective jurisdictions.

The dispute relative to Jamaica was settled by the admiral, Don Diego Columbus himself. He had already felt aggrieved by the distribution of these governments by the king without his consent or even knowledge, being contrary to the privileges inherited from his father, the discoverer. It was in vain to contend, however, when the matter was beyond his reach and involved in technical disputes. But as to the island of Jamaica, it in a manner lay at his own door, and he could not brook its being made a matter of gift to these brawling governors. Without waiting the slow and uncertain course of making remonstrances to the king, he took the affair, as a matter of plain right, into his own hands, and ordered a brave officer, Juan de Esquibel, the same who had subjugated the province of Higuey, to take possession of that island, with seventy men, and to hold it subject to his command.

Ojeda did not hear of this arrangement until he was on the point of embarking to make sail. In the heat of the moment he loudly defied the power of the admiral, and swore that if he ever found Juan de Esquibel on the island of Jamaica, he would strike off his head. The populace present heard this menace, and had too thorough an idea of the fiery and daring character of Ojeda to doubt that

he would carry it into effect. Notwithstanding his bravado, however, Juan de Esquibel proceeded according to his orders to take possession of the island of Jamaica.

The squadron of Nicuesa lingered for some time after the sailing of his rival. His courteous and engaging manners, aided by the rumour of great riches in the province of Veragua, where he intended to found his colony, had drawn numerous volunteers to his standard, insomuch that he had to purchase another ship to convey them.

Nicuesa was more of the courtier and the cavalier than the man of business, and had no skill in managing his pecuniary affairs. He had expended his funds with a lavish hand, and involved himself in debts which he had not the immediate means of paying. Many of his creditors knew that his expedition was regarded with an evil eye by the admiral, Don Diego Columbus; to gain favour with the latter, therefore, they threw all kinds of impediments in the way of Nicuesa. Never was an unfortunate gentleman more harassed and distracted by duns and demands, one plucking at his skirts as soon as another was satisfied. He succeeded, however, in getting all his forces embarked. He had seven hundred men, well chosen and armed, together with six horses. He chose Lope de Olano to be his captain-general, a seemingly impolitic appointment, as this Olano had been concerned with the notorious Roldan in his rebellion against Columbus.

The squadron sailed out of the harbour and put to sea, excepting one ship, which, with anchor atrip and sails unfurled, waited to receive Nicuesa, who was detained on shore until the last moment by the perplexities artfully multiplied around him.

Just as he was on the point of stepping into his boat he was arrested by the harpies of the law, and carried before the alcalde mayor to answer a demand for five hundred ducats, which he was ordered to pay on the spot, or prepare to go to prison.

This was a thunder-stroke to the unfortunate cavalier. In vain he represented his utter incapacity to furnish such a sum at the moment; in vain he represented the ruin that would accrue to himself and the vast injury to the public service, should he be prevented from joining his expedition. The alcalde mayor was inflexible, and Nicuesa was reduced to despair. At this critical moment relief came from a most unexpected quarter. The heart of a public notary was melted by his distress! He stepped forward in court and declared that rather than see so

gallant a gentleman reduced to extremity, he himself would pay down the money. Nicuesa gazed at him with astonishment, and could scarce believe his senses, but when he saw him actually pay off the debt, and found himself suddenly released from this dreadful embarrassment, he embraced his deliverer with tears of gratitude, and hastened with all speed to embark, lest some other legal spell should be laid upon his person.

CHAPTER III.

Exploits and Disasters of Ojeda on the Coast of Carthagena—Fate of the Veteran Juan de la Cosa.

[1509.]

It was on the 10th of November, 1509, that Alonzo de Ojeda set sail from San Domingo with two ships, two brigantines, and three hundred men. He took with him also twelve brood mares. Among the remarkable adventurers who embarked with him was Francisco Pizarro, afterwards renowned as the conqueror of Peru.* Hernando Cortez had likewise intended to sail in the expedition, but was prevented by an inflammation in one of his knees.

The voyage was speedy and prosperous, and they arrived late in the autumn in the harbour of Carthagena. The veteran Juan de la Cosa was well acquainted with this place, having sailed as pilot with Rodrigo de Bastides, at the time he discovered it in 1501. He warned Alonzo de Ojeda to be upon his guard, as the natives were a brave and warlike race, of Carib origin, far different from the soft and gentle inhabitants of the islands. They wielded great swords of palm-wood, defended themselves with osier targets, and dipped their arrows in a subtle poison. The women as well as the men mingled in battle, being expert in drawing the bow and throwing a species of lance called

* Francisco Pizarro was a native of Truxillo in Estramadura. He was the illegitimate fruit of an amour between Gonsalvo Pizarro, a veteran captain of infantry, and a damsel in low life. His childhood was passed in grovelling occupations incident to the humble condition of his mother, and he is said to have been a swineherd. When he had sufficiently increased in years and stature he enlisted as a soldier. His first campaigns may have been against the Moors in the war of Granada. He certainly served in Italy under the banner of the Great Captain, Gonsalvo of Cordova. His roving spirit then induced him to join the bands of adventurers to the New World. He was of ferocious courage, and, when engaged in any enterprise, possessed an obstinate perseverance neither to be deterred by danger, weakened by fatigue and hardship, nor checked by repeated disappointment. After having conquered the great kingdom of Peru, he was assassinated, at an advanced age, in 1541, defending himself bravely to the last.

the azagay. The warning was well timed, for the Indians of these parts had been irritated by the misconduct of previous adventurers, and flew to arms on the first appearance of the ships.

Juan de la Cosa now feared for the safety of the enterprise in which he had person, fortune, and official dignity at stake. He earnestly advised Ojeda to abandon this dangerous neighbourhood, and to commence a settlement in the Gulf of Uraba, where the people were less ferocious, and did not use poisoned weapons. Ojeda was too proud of spirit to alter his plans through fear of a naked foe. It is thought, too, that he had no objection to a skirmish, being desirous of a pretext to make slaves to be sent to Hispaniola in discharge of the debts he had left unpaid.* He landed, therefore, with a considerable part of his force, and a number of friars, who had been sent out to convert the Indians. His faithful lieutenant, being unable to keep him out of danger, stood by to second him.

Ojeda advanced towards the savages, and ordered the friars to read aloud a certain formula recently digested by profound jurists and divines in Spain. It began in stately form. "I, Alonzo de Ojeda, servant of the most high and mighty sovereigns of Castile and Leon, conquerors of barbarous nations, their messenger and captain, do notify unto you and make you know, in the best way I can, that God our Lord, one and eternal, created the heaven and the earth, and one man and one woman, from whom you and we and all the people of the earth proceeded and are descendants, as well as all those who shall come hereafter." The formula then went on to declare the fundamental principles of the Catholic Faith; the supreme power given to St. Peter over the world and all the human race, and exercised by his representative the Pope; the donation made by a late Pope of all this part of the world and all its inhabitants to the Catholic sovereigns of Castile; and the ready obedience already paid by many of its lands and islands and people to the agents and representatives of those sovereigns. It called upon those savages present, therefore, to do the same, to acknowledge the truth of the Christian doctrines, the supremacy of the Pope, and the sovereignty of the Catholic King, but in case of refusal, denounced upon them all the horrors of war, the desolation of their dwellings, the seizure of their property, and the slavery of their wives and children. Such was the extraordinary document, which, from this time forward,

* Las Casas, Hist. Ind., lib. ii. cap. 57, MS.

was read by the Spanish discoverers to the wondering savages of any newly-found country, as a prelude to sanctify the violence about to be inflicted on them.

When the friars had read this pious manifesto, Ojeda made signs of amity to the natives, and held up glittering presents. They had already suffered, however, from the cruelties of white men, and were not to be won by kindness. On the contrary they brandished their weapons, sounded their conchs, and prepared to make battle.

Juan de la Cosa saw the rising choler of Ojeda, and knew his fiery impatience. He again entreated him to abandon these hostile shores, and reminded him of the venomous weapons of the enemy. It was all in vain: Ojeda confided blindly in the protection of the Virgin. Putting up, as usual, a short prayer to his patroness, he drew his weapon, braced his buckler, and charged furiously upon the savages. Juan de la Cosa followed as heartily as if the battle had been of his own seeking. The Indians were soon routed, a number killed, and several taken prisoners; on their persons were found plates of gold, but of an inferior quality. Flushed by this triumph, Ojeda took several of the prisoners as guides, and pursued the flying enemy four leagues into the interior. He was followed, as usual, by his faithful lieutenant, the veteran La Cosa, continually remonstrating against his useless temerity, but hardily seconding him in the most hare-brained perils. Having penetrated far into the forest, they came to a stronghold of the enemy, where a numerous force was ready to receive them, armed with clubs, lances, arrows, and bucklers. Ojeda led his men to the charge with the old Castilian war cry, "Santiago!" The savages soon took to flight. Eight of their bravest warriors threw themselves into a cabin, and plied their bows and arrows so vigorously, that the Spaniards were kept at bay. Ojeda cried shame upon his followers to be daunted by eight naked men. Stung by this reproach, an old Castilian soldier rushed through a shower of arrows and forced the door of the cabin, but received a shaft through the heart, and fell dead on the threshold. Ojeda, furious at the sight, ordered fire to be set to the combustible edifice; in a moment it was in a blaze, and the eight warriors perished in the flames.

Seventy Indians were made captive and sent to the ships, and Ojeda, regardless of the remonstrances of Juan de la Cosa, continued his rash pursuit of the fugitives through the forest. In the dusk of the evening they

arrived at a village called Yurbaco; the inhabitants of which had fled to the mountains with their wives and children and principal effects. The Spaniards, imagining that the Indians were completely terrified and dispersed, now roved in quest of booty among the deserted houses, which stood distant from each other, buried among the trees. While they were thus scattered, troops of savages rushed forth, with furious yells, from all parts of the forest. The Spaniards endeavoured to gather together and support each other, but every little party were surrounded by a host of foes. They fought with desperate bravery, but for once their valour and their iron armour were of no avail; they were overwhelmed by numbers, and sank beneath war-clubs and poisoned arrows.

Ojeda on the first alarm collected a few soldiers and ensconced himself within a small enclosure, surrounded by palisades. Here he was closely besieged and galled by flights of arrows. He threw himself on his knees, covered himself with his buckler, and, being small and active, managed to protect himself from the deadly shower, but all his companions were slain by his side, some of them perishing in frightful agonies. At this fearful moment the veteran La Cosa, having heard of the peril of his commander, arrived with a few followers to his assistance. Stationing himself at the gate of the palisades, the brave Biscayan kept the savages at bay until most of his men were slain, and he himself was severely wounded. Just then Ojeda sprang forth like a tiger into the midst of the enemy, dealing his blows on every side. La Cosa would have seconded him, but was crippled by his wounds. He took refuge with the remnant of his men in an Indian cabin; the straw roof of which he aided them to throw off, lest the enemy should set it on fire. Here he defended himself until all his comrades, but one, were destroyed. The subtle poison of his wounds at length overpowered him, and he sank to the ground. Feeling death at hand, he called to his only surviving companion. "Brother," said he, "since God hath protected thee from harm, sally forth and fly, and if ever thou shouldst see Alonzo de Ojeda, tell him of my fate!"

Thus fell the hardy Juan de la Cosa, faithful and devoted to the very last; nor can we refrain from pausing to pay a passing tribute to his memory. He was acknowledged by his contemporaries to be one of the ablest of those gallant Spanish navigators who first explored the way to the New World. But it is by the honest and kindly

qualities of his heart that his memory is most endeared to us; it is, above all, by that loyalty in friendship displayed in this his last and fatal expedition. Warmed by his attachment for a more youthful and hot-headed adventurer, we see this wary veteran of the seas forgetting his usual prudence and the lessons of his experience, and embarking heart and hand, purse and person, in the wild enterprises of his favourite. We behold him watching over him as a parent, remonstrating with him as a counsellor, but fighting by him as a partisan; following him, without hesitation, into known and needless danger, to certain death itself, and showing no other solicitude in his dying moments, but to be remembered by his friend.

The history of these Spanish discoverers abounds in noble and generous traits of character; but few have charmed us more than this instance of loyalty to the last gasp, in the death of the stanch Juan de la Cosa. The Spaniard who escaped to tell the story of his end, was the only survivor of seventy that had followed Ojeda in this rash and headstrong inroad.

CHAPTER IV.

Arrival of Nicuesa—Vengeance taken on the Indians.

While these disastrous occurrences happened on shore, great alarm began to be felt on board of the ships. Days had elapsed since the party had adventured so rashly into the wilderness; yet nothing had been seen or heard of them, and the forest spread a mystery over their fate. Some of the Spaniards ventured a little distance into the woods, but were deterred by the distant shouts and yells of the savages, and the noise of their conchs and drums. Armed detachments then coasted the shore in boats, landing occasionally, climbing rocks and promontories, firing signal-guns and sounding trumpets. It was all in vain; they heard nothing but the echoes of their own noises, or perhaps the wild whoop of an Indian from the bosom of the forest. At length, when they were about to give up the search in despair, they came to a great thicket of mangrove-trees on the margin of the sea. These trees grow within the water, but their roots rise, and are intertwined above the surface. In this entangled and almost impervious grove, they caught a glimpse of a man in Spanish attire. They entered, and, to their astonishment, found

it to be Alonzo de Ojeda. He was lying on the matted roots of the mangroves, his buckler on his shoulder, and his sword in his hand; but so wasted with hunger and fatigue that he could not speak. They bore him to the firm land; made a fire on the shore to warm him, for he was chilled with the damp and cold of his hiding-place, and when he was a little revived they gave him food and wine. In this way he gradually recovered strength to tell his doleful story.*

He had succeeded in cutting his way through the host of savages, and attaining the woody skirts of the mountains; but when he found himself alone, and that all his brave men had been cut off, he was ready to yield up in despair. Bitterly did he reproach himself for having disregarded the advice of the veteran La Cosa, and deeply did he deplore the loss of that loyal follower, who had fallen a victim to his devotion. He scarce knew which way to bend his course, but continued on, in the darkness of the night and of the forest, until out of hearing of the yells of triumph uttered by the savages over the bodies of his men. When the day broke, he sought the rudest parts of the mountains, and hid himself until the night; then struggling forward among rocks, and precipices, and matted forests, he made his way to the seaside, but was too much exhausted to reach the ships. Indeed it was wonderful that one so small of frame should have been able to endure such great hardships; but he was of admirable strength and hardihood. His followers considered his escape from death as little less than miraculous, and he himself regarded it as another proof of the special protection of the Virgin; for, though he had, as usual, received no wound, yet it is said his buckler bore the dints of upwards of three hundred arrows.†

While the Spaniards were yet on the shore, administering to the recovery of their commander, they beheld a squadron of ships standing towards the harbour of Carthagena, and soon perceived them to be the ships of

* The picture here given is so much like romance, that the author quotes his authority at length :—"Llegaron adonde havia, junto al agua de la mar, unos Manglares, que son arboles, que siempre nacen, i crecen i permanecen dientro del agua de la mar, con grandes raices, asidas, i enmaranadas unas con otras, i alli metido, i escondido hallaron à Alonso de Ojeda, con su espada en la mano, i la rodela en las espaldas, i en alla sobre trecientas, senales de flechazos. Estabo descaido de hambre, que no podia hechar de si la habla; i si no fuera tan robusto, aunque chico de cuerpo, fuera muerto."

Las Casas, lib. ii. cap. 58, MS. Herrera, Hist. Ind., d. i. lib. vii. cap. 15.

† Las Casas, lib. ii. cap. 58, MS. Herrera, Hist. Ind., decad. i. lib. vii. cap. 15.

Nicuesa. Ojeda was troubled in mind at the sight, recollecting his late intemperate defiance of that cavalier; and, reflecting that, should he seek him in enmity, he was in no situation to maintain his challenge or defend himself. He ordered his men, therefore, to return on board the ships and leave him alone on the shore, and not to reveal the place of his retreat while Nicuesa should remain in the harbour.

As the squadron entered the harbour, the boats sallied forth to meet it. The first inquiry of Nicuesa was concerning Ojeda. The followers of the latter replied, mournfully, that their commander had gone on a warlike expedition into the country, but days had elapsed without his return, so that they feared some misfortune had befallen him. They entreated Nicuesa, therefore, to give his word, as a cavalier, that should Ojeda really be in distress, he would not take advantage of his misfortunes to revenge himself for their late disputes.

Nicuesa, who was a gentleman of noble and generous spirit, blushed with indignation at such a request. "Seek your commander instantly," said he; "bring him to me if he be alive; and I pledge myself not merely to forget the past, but to aid him as if he were a brother." *

When they met, Nicuesa received his late foe with open arms. "It is not," said he, "for hidalgos, like men of vulgar souls, to remember past differences when they behold one another in distress. Henceforth let all that has occurred between us be forgotten. Command me as a brother. Myself and my men are at your orders, to follow you wherever you please, until the deaths of Juan de la Cosa and his comrades are revenged."

The spirits of Ojeda were once more lifted up by this gallant and generous offer. The two governors, no longer rivals, landed four hundred of their men and several horses, and set off with all speed for the fatal village. They approached it in the night, and, dividing their forces into two parties, gave orders that not an Indian should be taken alive.

The village was buried in deep sleep, but the woods were filled with large parrots, which, being awakened, made a prodigious clamour. The Indians, however, thinking the Spaniards all destroyed, paid no attention to these noises. It was not until their houses were assailed, and wrapped in flames, that they took the alarm. They rushed forth, some with arms, some weaponless, but were received

* Las Casas, ubi sup.

at their doors by the exasperated Spaniards, and either slain on the spot, or driven back into the fire. Women fled wildly forth with children in their arms, but at sight of the Spaniards glittering in steel, and of the horses, which they supposed ravenous monsters, ran back, shrieking with horror, into their burning habitations. Great was the carnage, for no quarter was shown to age or sex. Many perished by the fire, and many by the sword.

When they had fully glutted their vengeance, the Spaniards ranged about for booty. While thus employed, they found the body of the unfortunate Juan de la Cosa. It was tied to a tree, but swollen and discoloured in a hideous manner by the poison of the arrows with which he had been slain. This dismal spectacle had such an effect upon the common men, that not one would remain in that place during the night. Having sacked the village, therefore, they left it a smoking ruin, and returned in triumph to their ships. The spoil in gold and other articles of value must have been great, for the share of Nicuesa and his men amounted to the value of seven thousand castillanos.* The two governors, now faithful confederates, parted with many expressions of friendship, and with mutual admiration of each other's prowess; and Nicuesa continued his voyage for the coast of Veragua.

CHAPTER V.

Ojeda founds the Colony of San Sebastian—Beleaguered by the Indians.

Ojeda now adopted, though tardily, the advice of his unfortunate lieutenant, Juan de la Cosa, and, giving up all thoughts of colonizing this disastrous part of the coast, steered his course for the Gulf of Uraba. He sought for some time the river Darien, famed among the Indians as abounding in gold, but not finding it, landed in various places, seeking a favourable site for his intended colony. His people were disheartened by the disasters they had already undergone, and the appearance of surrounding objects was not calculated to reassure them. The country, though fertile, and covered with rich and beautiful vegetation, was in their eyes a land of cannibals and monsters. They began to dread the strength as well as fierceness of the savages, who could transfix a man with their arrows even when covered with armour, and whose shafts were tipped

* Equivalent to 37,281 dollars of the present day.

with deadly poison. They heard the howlings of tigers, panthers, and, as they thought, lions in the forests, and encountered large and venomous serpents among the rocks and thickets. As they were passing along the banks of a river, one of their horses was seized by the leg by an enormous alligator, and dragged beneath the waves.*

At length Ojeda fixed upon a place for his town, on a height at the east end of the gulf. Here, landing all that could be spared from the ships, he began, with all diligence, to erect houses, giving this embryo capital of his province the name of San Sebastian, in honour of that sainted martyr, who was slain by arrows; hoping he might protect the inhabitants from the impoisoned shafts of the savages. As a further protection, he erected a large wooden fortress, and surrounded the place with a stockade. Feeling, however, the inadequacy of his handful of men to contend with the hostile tribes around him, he despatched a ship to Hispaniola, with a letter to the Bachelor, Martin Fernandez de Enciso, his alcalde mayor, informing him of his having established his seat of government, and urging him to lose no time in joining him with all the recruits, arms, and provisions he could command. By the same ship he transmitted to San Domingo all the captives and gold he had collected.

His capital being placed in a posture of defence, Ojeda now thought of making a progress through his wild territory; and set out, accordingly, with an armed band, to pay a friendly visit to a neighbouring cacique, reputed as possessing great treasures of gold. The natives, however, had by this time learnt the nature of these friendly visits, and were prepared to resist them. Scarcely had the Spaniards entered into the defiles of the surrounding forest, when they were assailed by flights of arrows from the close coverts of the thickets. Some were shot dead on the spot; others, less fortunate, expired raving with the torments of the poison; the survivors, filled with horror at the sight, and losing all presence of mind, retreated in confusion to the fortress.

It was some time before Ojeda could again persuade his men to take the field, so great was their dread of the poisoned weapons of the Indians. At length their provisions began to fail, and they were compelled to forage among the villages in search, not of gold, but of food.

In one of their expeditions they were surprised by an ambuscade of savages, in a gorge of the mountains, and

* Herrera, Hist. Ind., decad. i. lib. vii. cap. 16.

attacked with such fury and effect, that they were completely routed, and pursued with yells and howlings to the very gates of San Sebastian. Many died, in excruciating agony, of their wounds, and others recovered with extreme difficulty. Those who were well, no longer dared to venture forth in search of food; for the whole forest teemed with lurking foes. They devoured such herbs and roots as they could find, without regard to their quality. The humours of their bodies became corrupted, and various diseases, combined with the ravages of famine, daily thinned their numbers. The sentinel who feebly mounted guard at night, was often found dead at his post in the morning. Some stretched themselves on the ground and expired of mere famine and debility; nor was death any longer regarded as an evil, but rather as a welcome relief from a life of horror and despair.

CHAPTER VI.

Alonzo de Ojeda supposed by the Savages to have a charmed Life—Their Experiment to try the Fact.

In the meantime the Indians continued to harass the garrison, lying in wait to surprise the foraging parties, cutting off all stragglers, and sometimes approaching the walls in open defiance. On such occasions Ojeda sallied forth at the head of his men, and from his great agility was the first to overtake the retreating foe. He slew more of their warriors with his single arm than all his followers together. Though often exposed to showers of arrows, none had ever wounded him, and the Indians began to think he had a charmed life. Perhaps they had heard from fugitive prisoners, the idea entertained by himself and his followers of his being under supernatural protection. Determined to ascertain the fact, they placed four of their most dextrous archers in ambush with orders to single him out. A number of them advanced towards the fort sounding their conchs and drums, and uttering yells of defiance. As they expected, the impetuous Ojeda sallied forth immediately at the head of his men. The Indians fled towards the ambuscade, drawing him in heedless pursuit. The archers waited until he was full in front, and then launched their deadly shafts. Three struck his buckler and glanced harmlessly off, but the fourth pierced his thigh. Satisfied that he was wounded beyond the

possibility of cure, the savages retreated with shouts of triumph.

Ojeda was borne back to the fortress in great anguish of body and despondency of spirit. For the first time in his life he had lost blood in battle. The charm in which he had hitherto confided was broken; or rather, the Holy Virgin appeared to have withdrawn her protection. He had the horrible death of his followers before his eyes, who had perished of their wounds in raving frenzy.

One of the symptoms of the poison was to shoot a thrilling chill through the wounded part; from this circumstance, perhaps, a remedy suggested itself to the imagination of Ojeda, which few but himself could have had the courage to undergo. He caused two plates of iron to be made red hot, and ordered a surgeon to apply them to each orifice of the wound. The surgeon shuddered and refused, saying he would not be the murderer of his general.* Upon this Ojeda made a solemn vow that he would hang him unless he obeyed. To avoid the gallows, the surgeon applied the glowing plates. Ojeda refused to be tied down, or that any one should hold him during this frightful operation. He endured it without shrinking or uttering a murmur, although it so inflamed his whole system, that they had to wrap him in sheets steeped in vinegar, to allay the burning heat which raged throughout his body; and we are assured that a barrel of vinegar was exhausted for the purpose. The desperate remedy succeeded: the cold poison, says Bishop Las Casas, was consumed by the vivid fire.† How far the venerable historian is correct in his postulate, surgeons may decide; but many incredulous persons will be apt to account for the cure by surmising that the arrow was not envenomed.

CHAPTER VII.

Arrival of a strange Ship at San Sebastian.

Alonzo de Ojeda, though pronounced out of danger, was still disabled by his wound, and his helpless situation completed the despair of his companions; for while he was in health and vigour, his buoyant and mercurial spirit, his active, restless, and enterprising habits, im-

* Charlevoix, ut sup. p. 293.
† Las Casas, Hist. Ind., lib. ii. cap. 59, MS.

parted animation, if not confidence, to every one around him. The only hope of relief was from the sea, and that was nearly extinct, when one day, to the unspeakable joy of the Spaniards, a sail appeared on the horizon. It made for the port and dropped anchor at the foot of the height of San Sebastian, and there was no longer a doubt that it was the promised succour from San Domingo.

The ship came indeed from the island of Hispaniola, but it had not been fitted out by the Bachelor Enciso. The commander's name was Bernardino de Talavera. This man was one of the loose heedless adventurers who abounded in San Domingo. His carelessness and extravagance had involved him in debt, and he was threatened with a prison. In the height of his difficulties the ship arrived which Ojeda had sent to San Domingo, freighted with slaves and gold, an earnest of the riches to be found at San Sebastian. Bernardo de Talavera immediately conceived the project of giving his creditors the slip, and escaping to this new settlement. He understood that Ojeda was in need of recruits, and felt assured that from his own reckless conduct in money matters, he would sympathize with any one harassed by debt. He drew into his schemes a number of desperate debtors like himself, nor was he scrupulous about filling up his ranks with recruits whose legal embarrassments arose from more criminal causes. Never did a more vagabond crew engage in a project of colonization.

How to provide themselves with a vessel was now the question. They had neither money nor credit; but they had cunning and courage, and were troubled by no scruples of conscience; thus qualified, a knave will often succeed better for a time than an honest man; it is in the long run that he fails, as will be illustrated in the case of Talavera and his hopeful associates. While casting about for means to escape to San Sebastian, they heard of a vessel belonging to certain Genoese, which was at Cape Tiburon, at the western extremity of the island, taking in a cargo of bacon and cassava bread for San Domingo. Nothing could have happened more opportunely: here was a ship, amply stored with provisions, and ready to their hand; they had nothing to do but seize it and embark.

The gang, accordingly, seventy in number, made their way separately and secretly to Cape Tiburon, where, assembling at an appointed time and place, they boarded the vessel, overpowered the crew, weighed anchor, and set

sail. They were heedless, hap-hazard mariners, and knew little of the management of a vessel; the historian Charlevoix thinks, therefore, that it was a special Providence which guided them to San Sebastian. Whether or not the good father is right in his opinion, it is certain that the arrival of the ship rescued the garrison from the very brink of destruction.*

Talavera and his gang, though they had come lightly by their prize, were not disposed to part with it as frankly, but demanded to be paid down in gold for the provisions furnished to the starving colonists. Ojeda agreed to their terms, and taking the supplies into his possession, dealt them out sparingly to his companions. Several of his hungry followers were dissatisfied with their portions, and even accused Ojeda of unfairness in reserving an undue share for himself. Perhaps there may have been some ground for this charge, arising, not from any selfishness in the character of Ojeda, but from one of those superstitious fancies with which his mind was tinged; for we are told that, for many years, he had been haunted by a presentiment that he should eventually die of hunger.†

This lurking horror of the mind may have made him depart from his usual free and lavish spirit in doling out these providential supplies, and may have induced him to set by an extra portion for himself, as a precaution against his anticipated fate; certain it is, that great clamours rose among his people, some of whom threatened to return in the pirate vessel to Hispaniola. He succeeded, however, in pacifying them for the present, by representing the necessity of husbanding their supplies, and by assuring them that the Bachelor Enciso could not fail soon to arrive, when there would be provisions in abundance.

CHAPTER VIII.

Factions in the Colony—A Convention made.

Days and days elapsed, but no relief arrived at San Sebastian. The Spaniards kept a ceaseless watch upon the sea, but the promised ship failed to appear. With all the husbandry of Ojeda, the stock of provisions was nearly consumed; famine again prevailed, and several of the garrison perished through their various sufferings and their lack of sufficient nourishment. The survivors now became

* Hist. S. Domingo, lib. iv. † Herrera, decad. i. lib. viii. cap. 3.

factious in their misery, and a plot was formed among them to seize upon one of the vessels in the harbour, and make sail for Hispaniola.

Ojeda discovered their intentions, and was reduced to great perplexity. He saw that to remain here without relief from abroad was certain destruction, yet he clung to his desperate enterprise. It was his only chance for fortune or command; for should this settlement be broken up, he might try in vain, with his exhausted means and broken credit, to obtain another post or set on foot another expedition. Ruin, in fact, would overwhelm him, should he return without success.

He exerted himself, therefore, to the utmost to pacify his men; representing the folly of abandoning a place where they had established a foothold, and where they only needed a reinforcement to enable them to control the surrounding country, and to make themselves masters of its riches. Finding they still demurred, he offered, now that he was sufficiently recovered from his wound, to go himself to San Domingo in quest of reinforcements and supplies.

This offer had the desired effect. Such confidence had the people in the energy, ability, and influence of Ojeda, that they felt assured of relief should he seek it in person. They made a kind of convention with him, therefore, in which it was agreed that they should remain quietly at Sebastian for the space of fifty days. At the end of this time, in case no tidings had been received of Ojeda, they were to be at liberty to abandon the settlement and return in the brigantines to Hispaniola. In the meantime Francisco Pizarro was to command the colony as lieutenant of Ojeda, until the arrival of his alcalde mayor, the Bachelor Enciso. This convention being made, Ojeda embarked in the ship of Bernardino de Talavera. That cutpurse of the ocean and his loose-handed crew were effectually cured of their ambition to colonize. Disappointed in the hope of finding abundant wealth at San Sebastian, and dismayed at the perils and horrors of the surrounding wilderness, they preferred returning to Hispaniola, even at the risk of chains and dungeons. Doubtless they thought that the influence of Ojeda would be sufficient to obtain their pardon, especially as their timely succour had been the salvation of the colony.

CHAPTER IX.

Disastrous Voyage of Ojeda in the Pirate Ship.

Ojeda had scarce put to sea in the ship of these freebooters, when a quarrel arose between him and Talavera. Accustomed to take the lead among his companions, still feeling himself governor, and naturally of a domineering spirit, Ojeda, on coming on board, had assumed the command as a matter of course. Talavera, who claimed dominion over the ship, by the right no doubt of trover and conversion, or, in other words, of downright piracy, resisted this usurpation.

Ojeda, as usual, would speedily have settled the question by the sword, but he had the whole vagabond crew against him, who overpowered him with numbers and threw him in irons. Still his swelling spirit was unsubdued. He reviled Talavera and his gang as recreants, traitors, pirates, and offered to fight the whole of them successively, provided they would give him a clear deck, and come on two at a time. Notwithstanding his diminutive size, they had too high an idea of his prowess, and had heard too much of his exploits, to accept his challenge; so they kept him raging in his chains while they pursued their voyage.

They had not proceeded far, however, when a violent storm arose. Talavera and his crew knew little of navigation, and were totally ignorant of those seas. The raging of the elements, the baffling winds and currents, and the danger of unknown rocks and shoals, filled them with confusion and alarm. They knew not whither they were driving before the storm, or where to seek for shelter. In this hour of peril they called to mind that Ojeda was a sailor as well as a soldier, and that he had repeatedly navigated these seas. Making a truce, therefore, for the common safety, they took off his irons, on condition that he would pilot the vessel during the remainder of the voyage.

Ojeda acquitted himself with his accustomed spirit and intrepidity; but the vessel had already been swept so far to the westward that all his skill was ineffectual in endeavouring to work up to Hispaniola against storms and adverse currents. Borne away by the Gulf Stream, and tempest-tossed for many days, until the shattered vessel was almost in a foundering condition, he saw no alternative but to run it ashore on the southern coast of Cuba.

Here then the crew of freebooters landed from their

prize in more desperate plight than when they first took possession of it. They were on a wild and unfrequented coast; their vessel lay a wreck upon the sands; and their only chance was to travel on foot to the eastern extremity of the island, and seek some means of crossing to Hispaniola, where, after all their toils, they might perhaps only arrive to be thrown into a dungeon. Such, however, is the yearning of civilized men after the haunts of cultivated society, that they set out, at every risk, upon their long and painful journey.

CHAPTER X.

Toilsome March of Ojeda and his Companions through the Morasses of Cuba.

Notwithstanding the recent services of Ojeda, the crew of Talavera still regarded him with hostility; but, if they had felt the value of his skill and courage at sea, they were no less sensible of their importance on shore, and he soon acquired that ascendancy over them which belongs to a master-spirit in time of trouble.

Cuba was as yet uncolonized. It was a place of refuge to the unhappy natives of Hayti, who fled hither from the whips and chains of their European taskmasters. The forests abounded with these wretched fugitives, who often opposed themselves to the shipwrecked party, supposing them to be sent by their late masters to drag them back to captivity.

Ojeda easily repulsed these attacks; but found that these fugitives had likewise inspired the villagers with hostility to all European strangers. Seeing that his companions were too feeble and disheartened to fight their way through the populous parts of the island, or to climb the rugged mountains of the interior, he avoided all towns and villages, and led them through the close forests and broad green savannas which extended between the mountains and the sea.

He had only made a choice of evils. The forests gradually retired from the coast. The savannas, where the Spaniards at first had to contend merely with long rank grass and creeping vines, soon ended in salt marshes, where the oozy bottom yielded no firm foothold, and the mud and water reached to their knees. Still they pressed forward, continually hoping in a little while to arrive at a firmer soil, and flattering themselves they beheld fresh meadow-land before them, but continually deceived. The

farther they proceeded, the deeper grew the mire, until, after they had been eight days on this dismal journey, they found themselves in the centre of a vast morass, where the water reached to their girdles. Though thus almost drowned, they were tormented with incessant thirst, for all the water around them was as briny as the ocean. They suffered, too, the cravings of extreme hunger, having but a scanty supply of cassava bread and cheese, and a few potatoes and other roots, which they devoured raw. When they wished to sleep, they had to climb among the twisted roots of mangrove-trees, which grew in clusters in the water. Still the dreary marsh widened and deepened. In many places they had to cross rivers and inlets; where some, who could not swim, were drowned, and others were smothered in the mire.

Their situation became wild and desperate. Their cassava bread was spoiled by the water, and their stock of roots nearly exhausted. The interminable morass still extended before them, while, to return, after the distance they had come, was hopeless. Ojeda alone kept up a resolute spirit, and cheered and urged them forward. He had the little Flemish painting of the Madona, which had been given him by the Bishop Fonseca, carefully stored among the provisions in his knapsack. Whenever he stopped to repose among the roots of the mangrove-trees, he took out this picture, placed it among the branches, and kneeling, prayed devoutly to the Virgin for protection. This he did repeatedly in the course of the day, and prevailed upon his companions to follow his example. Nay, more, at a moment of great despondency, he made a solemn vow to his patroness that if she conducted him alive through this peril, he would erect a chapel in the first Indian village he should arrive at, and leave her picture there, to remain an object of adoration to the Gentiles.*

This frightful morass extended for the distance of thirty leagues, and was so deep and difficult, so entangled by roots and creeping vines, so cut up by creeks and rivers, and so beset by quagmires, that they were thirty days in traversing it. Out of the number of seventy men that set out from the ship but thirty-five remained. "Certain it is," observes the venerable Las Casas, "the sufferings of the Spaniards in the New World, in search of wealth, have been more cruel and severe than ever nation in the world endured; but those experienced by Ojeda and his men have surpassed all others."

* Las Casas, Hist. Ind., lib. ii. cap. 60, MS.

They were at length so overcome by hunger and fatigue, that some lay down and yielded up the ghost, and others, seating themselves among the mangrove-trees, waited in despair for death to put an end to their miseries. Ojeda, with a few of the lightest and most vigorous, continued to struggle forward, and to their unutterable joy, at length arrived to where the land was firm and dry. They soon descried a footpath, and, following it, arrived at an Indian village, commanded by a cacique called Cueybàs. No sooner did they reach the village than they sank to the earth exhausted.

The Indians gathered round and gazed at them with wonder; but when they learnt their story, they exhibited a humanity that would have done honour to the most professing Christians. They bore them to their dwellings, set meat and drink before them, and vied with each other in discharging the offices of the kindest humanity. Finding that a number of their companions were still in the morass, the cacique sent a large party of Indians with provisions for their relief; with orders to bring on their shoulders such as were too feeble to walk. "The Indians," says the Bishop Las Casas, "did more than they were ordered; for so they always do, when they are not exasperated by ill treatment. The Spaniards were brought to the village, succoured, cherished, consoled, and almost worshipped as if they had been angels."

CHAPTER XI.

Ojeda performs his Vow to the Virgin.

Being recovered from his sufferings, Alonzo de Ojeda prepared to perform his vow concerning the picture of the Virgin, though sorely must it have grieved him to part with a relic to which he attributed his deliverance from so many perils. He built a little hermitage or oratory in the village, and furnished it with an altar, above which he placed the picture. He then summoned the benevolent cacique, and explained to him as well as his limited knowledge of the language, or the aid of interpreters would permit, the main points of the Catholic faith, and especially the history of the Virgin, whom he represented as the mother of the Deity that reigned in the skies, and the great advocate for mortal man.

The worthy cacique listened to him with mute attention, and though he might not clearly comprehend the doctrine,

yet he conceived a profound veneration for the picture. The sentiment was shared by his subjects. They kept the little oratory always swept clean, and decorated it with cotton hangings, laboured by their own hands, and with various votive offerings. They composed couplets or areytos in honour of the Virgin, which they sang to the accompaniment of rude musical instruments, dancing to the sound under the groves which surrounded the hermitage.

A further anecdote concerning this relic may not be unacceptable. The venerable Las Casas, who records these facts, informs us that he arrived at the village of Cueybàs some time after the departure of Ojeda. He found the oratory preserved with the most religious care, as a sacred place, and the picture of the Virgin regarded with fond adoration. The poor Indians crowded to attend mass, which he performed at the altar; they listened attentively to his paternal instructions, and at his request brought their children to be baptized. The good Las Casas having heard much of this famous relic of Ojeda, was desirous of obtaining possession of it, and offered to give the cacique, in exchange, an image of the Virgin which he had brought with him. The chieftain made an evasive answer, and seemed much troubled in mind. The next morning he did not make his appearance.

Las Casas went to the oratory to perform mass, but found the altar stripped of its precious relic. On inquiring, he learnt that in the night the cacique had fled to the woods, bearing off with him his beloved picture of the Virgin. It was in vain that Las Casas sent messengers after him, assuring him that he should not be deprived of the relic, but, on the contrary, that the image should likewise be presented to him. The cacique refused to venture from the fastnesses of the forest, nor did he return to his village and replace the picture in the oratory until after the departure of the Spaniards.*

CHAPTER XII.

Arrival of Ojeda at Jamaica—His reception by Juan de Esquibel.

When the Spaniards were completely restored to health and strength, they resumed their journey. The cacique sent a large body of his subjects to carry their provisions

* Las Casas, Hist. Ind., cap. 61, MS. Herrera, Hist. Ind., decad. i. lib. ix. cap. 15.

and knapsacks, and to guide them across a desert tract of country to the province of Macaca, where Christopher Columbus had been hospitably entertained on his voyage along the coast. They experienced equal kindness from its cacique and his people, for such seems almost invariably the case with the natives of these islands, before they had held much intercourse with Europeans.

The province of Macaca was situated at Cape de la Cruz, the nearest point to the island of Jamaica. Here Ojeda learnt that there were Spaniards settled on that island, being in fact the party commanded by the very Juan de Esquibel, whose head he had threatened to strike off, when departing in swelling style from San Domingo. It seemed to be the fortune of Ojeda to have his bravadoes visited on his head in times of trouble and humiliation. He found himself compelled to apply for succour to the very man he had so vaingloriously menaced. This was no time, however, to stand on points of pride: he procured a canoe and Indians from the cacique of Macaca, and one Pedro de Ordas undertook the perilous voyage of twenty leagues in the frail bark, and arrived safe at Jamaica.

No sooner did Esquibel receive the message of Ojeda, than, forgetting past menaces, he instantly despatched a caravel to bring to him the unfortunate discoverer and his companions. He received him with the utmost kindness, lodged him in his own house, and treated him in all things with the most delicate attention. He was a gentleman who had seen prosperous days, but had fallen into adversity, and been buffeted about the world, and had learnt how to respect the feelings of a proud spirit in distress. Ojeda had the warm, touchy heart to feel such conduct; he remained several days with Esquibel in frank communion, and when he sailed for San Domingo they parted the best of friends.

And here we cannot but remark, the singular difference in character and conduct of these Spanish adventurers when dealing with each other, or with the unhappy natives. Nothing could be more chivalrous, urbane, and charitable; nothing more pregnant with noble sacrifices of passion and interest, with magnanimous instances of forgiveness of injuries and noble contests of generosity, than the transactions of the discoverers with each other; but the moment they turned to treat with the Indians, even with brave and high-minded caciques, they were vindictive, bloodthirsty, and implacable. The very Juan de Esquibel, who could requite the recent hostility of

Ojeda with such humanity and friendship, was the same who, under the government of Ovando, laid desolate the province of Higuey in Hispaniola, and inflicted atrocious cruelties upon its inhabitants.

When Alonzo de Ojeda set sail for San Domingo, Bernaldino de Talavera and his rabble adherents remained at Jamaica. They feared to be brought to account for their piratical exploit in stealing the Genoese vessel, and that, in consequence of their recent violence to Ojeda, they would find in him an accuser rather than an advocate. The latter, however, in the opinion of Las Casas, who knew him well, was not a man to make accusations. With all his faults he did not harbour malice. He was quick and fiery, it is true, and his sword was too apt to leap from its scabbard on the least provocation; but after the first flash all was over, and if he cooled upon an injury, he never sought for vengeance.

CHAPTER XIII.

Arrival of Alonzo de Ojeda at San Domingo—Conclusion of his Story.

On arriving at San Domingo, the first inquiry of Alonzo de Ojeda was after the Bachelor Enciso. He was told that he had departed long before, with abundant supplies for the colony, and that nothing had been heard of him since his departure. Ojeda waited for a time in hopes of hearing, by some return ship, of the safe arrival of the Bachelor at San Sebastian. No tidings, however, arrived, and he began to fear that he had been lost in those storms which had beset himself on his return voyage.

Anxious for the relief of his settlement, and fearing that, by delay, his whole scheme of colonization would be defeated, he now endeavoured to set on foot another armament, and to enlist a new set of adventurers. His efforts, however, were all ineffectual. The disasters of his colony were known, and his own circumstances were considered desperate. He was doomed to experience the fate that too often attends sanguine and brilliant projectors. The world is dazzled by them for a time, and hails them as heroes while successful; but misfortune dissipates the charm, and they become stigmatized with the appellation of adventurers. When Ojeda figured in San Domingo as the conqueror of Caonabo, as the commander of a squadron, as the governor of a province, his prowess and

exploits were the theme of every tongue. When he set sail, in vaunting style, for his seat of government, setting the viceroy at defiance, and threatening the life of Esquibel, every one thought that fortune was at his beck, and he was about to accomplish wonders. A few months had elapsed, and he walked the streets of San Domingo a needy man, shipwrecked in hope and fortune. His former friends, dreading some new demand upon their purses, looked coldly on him; his schemes, once so extolled, were now pronounced wild and chimerical, and he was subjected to all kinds of slights and humiliations in the very place which had been the scene of his greatest vainglory.

While Ojeda was thus lingering at San Domingo, the admiral, Don Diego Columbus, sent a party of soldiers to Jamaica to arrest Talavera and his pirate crew. They were brought in chains to San Domingo, thrown into dungeons, and tried for the robbery of the Genoese vessel. Their crime was too notorious to admit of doubt, and, being convicted, Talavera and several of his principal accomplices were hanged. Such was the end of their frightful journey by sea and land. Never had vagabonds travelled farther nor toiled harder to arrive at a gallows!

In the course of the trial Ojeda had naturally been summoned as a witness, and his testimony must have tended greatly to the conviction of the culprits. This drew upon him the vengeance of the surviving comrades of Talavera, who still lurked about San Domingo. As he was returning home one night at a late hour, he was waylaid and set upon by a number of these miscreants. He displayed his usual spirit, setting his back against a wall, and drawing his sword, he defended himself admirably against the whole gang; nor was he content with beating them off, but pursued them for some distance through the streets; and having thus put them to utter rout, returned tranquil and unharmed to his lodgings.

This is the last achievement recorded of the gallant but reckless Ojeda; for here his bustling career terminated, and he sank into the obscurity which gathers round a ruined man. His health was broken by various hardships and by the lurking effects of the wound received at San Sebastian, which had been but imperfectly cured. Poverty and neglect, and the corroding sickness of the heart, contributed, no less than the maladies of the body, to quench that sanguine and fiery temper, which had hitherto been the secret of his success, and to render him the mere wreck of his former self; for there is no ruin so

hopeless and complete as that of a towering spirit humiliated and broken down. He appears to have lingered some time at San Domingo. Gomara, in his History of the Indies, affirms that he turned monk, and entered in the convent at San Francisco, where he died. Such a change would not have been surprising in a man who, in his wildest career, mingled the bigot with the soldier; nor was it unusual with military adventurers in those days, after passing their youth in the bustle and licentiousness of the camp, to end their days in the quiet and mortification of the cloister. Las Casas, however, who was at San Domingo at the time, makes no mention of the fact, as he certainly would have done, had it taken place. He confirms, however, all that has been said of the striking reverse in his character and circumstances; and he adds an affecting picture of his last moments, which may serve as a wholesome comment on his life. He died so poor that he did not leave money enough to provide for his interment; and so broken in spirit, that, with his last breath, he entreated his body might be buried in the monastery of San Francisco, just at the portal, in humble expiation of his past pride, "*that every one who entered might tread upon his grave.*"*

Such was the fate of Alonzo de Ojeda,—and who does not forget his errors and his faults at the threshold of his humble and untimely grave! He was one of the most fearless and aspiring of the band of "Ocean chivalry" that followed the footsteps of Columbus. His story presents a lively picture of the daring enterprises, the extravagant exploits, the thousand accidents, by flood and field, which checkered the life of a Spanish cavalier in that roving and romantic age.

"Never," says Charlevoix, "was a man more suited for a *coup-de-main*, or to achieve and suffer great things under the direction of another; none had a heart more lofty, nor ambition more aspiring; none ever took less heed of fortune, nor showed greater firmness of soul, nor found more resources in his own courage; but none was less calculated to be commander-in-chief of a great enterprise. Good management and good fortune for ever failed him."†

* Las Casas, ubi sup. † Charlevoix, Hist. San Domingo.

THE VOYAGE OF DIEGO DE NICUESA.

CHAPTER I.

Nicuesa sails to the Westward—His Shipwreck and subsequent Disasters.

We have now to recount the fortunes experienced by the gallant and generous Diego de Nicuesa, after his parting from Alonzo de Ojeda at Carthagena. On resuming his voyage, he embarked in a caravel, that he might be able to coast the land and reconnoitre; he ordered that the two brigantines, one of which was commanded by his lieutenant Lope de Olano, should keep near to him, while the large vessels, which drew more water, should stand further out to sea. The squadron arrived upon the coast of Veragua, in stormy weather; and, as Nicuesa could not find any safe harbour, and was apprehensive of rocks and shoals, he stood out to sea at the approach of night, supposing that Lope de Olano would follow him with the brigantines according to his orders. The night was boisterous, the caravel was much tossed and driven about, and when the morning dawned, not one of the squadron was in sight.

Nicuesa feared some accident had befallen the brigantines; he stood for the land, and coasted along it in search of them until he came to a large river, into which he entered and came to anchor. He had not been here long when the stream suddenly subsided, having merely been swollen by the rains. Before he had time to extricate himself, the caravel grounded, and at length fell over on one side. The current rushing like a torrent, strained the feeble bark to such a degree, that her seams yawned and she appeared ready to go to pieces. In this moment of peril a hardy seaman threw himself into the water to carry the end of a rope on shore as a means of saving the crew. He was swept away by the furious current, and perished in the sight of his companions. Undismayed by his fate, another brave seaman plunged into the waves and succeeded in reaching the shore. He then fastened one end of a rope firmly to a tree, and the other being secured on board of the caravel, Nicuesa and his crew passed one by one along it, and reached the shore in safety.

Scarcely had they landed, when the caravel went to pieces, and with it perished their provisions, clothing, and

all other necessaries. Nothing remained to them but the boat of the caravel, which was accidentally cast on shore. Here then they were, in helpless plight, on a remote and savage coast, without food, without arms, and almost naked. What had become of the rest of the squadron they knew not. Some feared that the brigantines had been wrecked; others called to mind that Lope de Olano had been one of the loose lawless men confederated with Francisco Roldan in his rebellion against Columbus, and, judging him from the school in which he had served, hinted their apprehensions that he had deserted with the brigantines. Nicuesa partook of their suspicions, and was anxious and sad at heart. He concealed his uneasiness, however, and endeavoured to cheer up his companions, proposing that they should proceed westward on foot in search of Veragua, the seat of his intended government; observing that, if the ships had survived the tempest, they would probably repair to that place. They accordingly set off along the sea-shore, for the thickness of the forest prevented their traversing the interior. Four of the hardiest sailors put to sea in the boat and kept abreast of them, to help them across the bays and rivers.

Their sufferings were extreme. Most of them were destitute of shoes, and many almost naked. They had to clamber over sharp and rugged rocks, and to struggle through dense forests beset with thorns and brambles. Often they had to wade across rank fens and morasses and drowned lands, or to traverse deep and rapid streams.

Their food consisted of herbs and roots and shell-fish gathered along the shore. Had they even met with Indians, they would have dreaded, in their unarmed state, to apply to them for provisions, lest they should take revenge for the outrages committed along this coast by other Europeans.

To render their sufferings more intolerable, they were in doubt whether, in the storms which preceded their shipwreck, they had not been driven past Veragua, in which case each step would take them so much the farther from their desired haven.

Still they laboured feebly forward, encouraged by the words and the example of Nicuesa, who cheerfully partook of the toils and hardships of the meanest of his men.

They had slept one night at the foot of impending rocks, and were about to resume their weary march in the morning, when they were espied by some Indians from a neighbouring height. Among the followers of Nicuesa

was a favourite page, whose tattered finery and white hat caught the quick eyes of the savages. One of them immediately singled him out, and taking deadly aim, let fly an arrow that laid him expiring at the feet of his master. While the generous cavalier mourned over his slaughtered page, consternation prevailed among his companions, each fearing for his own life. The Indians, however, did not follow up this casual act of hostility, but suffered the Spaniards to pursue their painful journey unmolested.

Arriving one day at the point of a great bay that ran far inland, they were conveyed, a few at a time, in the boat, to what appeared to be the opposite point. Being all landed, and resuming their march, they found to their surprise that they were on an island, separated from the main-land by a great arm of the sea. The sailors who managed the boat were too weary to take them to the opposite shore; they remained therefore all night upon the island.

In the morning they prepared to depart, but, to their consternation, the boat with the four mariners had disappeared. They ran anxiously from point to point, uttering shouts and cries, in hopes the boat might be in some inlet; they clambered the rocks and strained their eyes over the sea. It was all in vain. No boat was to be seen: no voice responded to their call; it was too evident the four mariners had either perished or had deserted them.

CHAPTER II.

Nicuesa and his Men on a desolate Island.

The situation of Nicuesa and his men was dreary and desperate in the extreme. They were on a desolate island, bordering upon a swampy coast, in a remote and lonely sea, where commerce never spread a sail. Their companions in the other ships, if still alive and true to them, had doubtless given them up for lost; and many years might elapse before the casual bark of a discoverer might venture along these shores. Long before that time their fate would be sealed; and their bones, bleaching on the sands, would alone tell their story.

In this hopeless state many abandoned themselves to frantic grief, wandering about the island, wringing their hands and uttering groans and lamentations; others called

upon God for succour, and many sat down in silent and sullen despair.

The cravings of hunger and thirst at length roused them to exertion. They found no food but a few shell-fish scattered along the shore, and coarse herbs and roots, some of them of an unwholesome quality. The island had neither springs nor streams of fresh water, and they were fain to slake their thirst at the brackish pools of the marshes.

Nicuesa endeavoured to animate his men with new hopes. He employed them in constructing a raft of drift-wood and branches of trees, for the purpose of crossing the arm of the sea that separated them from the main-land. It was a difficult task, for they were destitute of tools; and when the raft was finished, they had no oars with which to manage it. Some of the most expert swim-mers undertook to propel it, but they were too much enfeebled by their sufferings. On their first essay, the currents which sweep that coast bore the raft out to sea, and they swam back with difficulty to the island. Having no other chance of escape, and no other means of exercis-ing and keeping up the spirits of his followers, Nicuesa repeatedly ordered new rafts to be constructed; but the result was always the same, and the men at length either grew too feeble to work, or renounced the attempt in despair.

Thus, day after day, and week after week elapsed, without any mitigation of suffering or any prospect of relief. Every day some one or other sank under his miseries, a victim, not so much to hunger and thirst, as to grief and despondency. His death was envied by his wretched survivors, many of whom were reduced to such debility, that they had to crawl on hands and knees in search of the herbs and shell-fish which formed their scanty food.

CHAPTER III.

Arrival of a boat—Conduct of Lope de Olano.

When the unfortunate Spaniards, without hope of suc-cour, began to consider death as a desirable end to their miseries, they were roused to new life one day by behold-ing a sail gleaming on the horizon. Their exultation was checked, however, by the reflection how many chances there were against its approaching this wild and desolate

island. Watching it with anxious eyes, they put up prayers to God to conduct it to their relief; and at length, to their great joy, they perceived that it was steering directly for the island. On a nearer approach, it proved to be one of the brigantines which had been commanded by Lope de Olano. It came to anchor: a boat put off, and among the crew were the four sailors who had disappeared so mysteriously from the island.

These men accounted in a satisfactory manner for their desertion. They had been persuaded that the ships were in some harbour to the eastward, and that they were daily leaving them farther behind. Disheartened at the constant, and, in their opinion, fruitless toil which fell to their share in the struggle westward, they resolved to take their own counsel, without risking the opposition of Nicuesa. In the dead of the night, therefore, when their companions on the island were asleep, they silently cast off their boat, and retraced their course along the coast. After several days' toil they found the brigantines under the command of Lope de Olano, in the river of Belen, the scene of the disasters of Columbus in his fourth voyage.

The conduct of Lope de Olano was regarded with suspicion by his contemporaries, and is still subject to doubt. He is supposed to have deserted Nicuesa designedly, intending to usurp the command of the expedition. Men, however, were prone to judge harshly of him from his having been concerned in the treason and rebellion of Francisco Roldan. On the stormy night when Nicuesa stood out to sea to avoid the dangers of the shore, Olano took shelter under the lee of an island. Seeing nothing of the caravel of his commander in the morning, he made no effort to seek for it, but proceeded with the brigantines to the river of Chagres, where he found the ships at anchor. They had landed all their cargo, being almost in a sinking condition from the ravages of the worms. Olano persuaded the crews that Nicuesa had perished in the late storm, and, being his lieutenant, he assumed the command. Whether he had been perfidious or not in his motives, his command was but a succession of disasters. He sailed from Chagres for the river of Belen, where the ships were found so damaged that they had to be broken to pieces. Most of the people constructed wretched cabins on the shore, where, during a sudden storm, they were almost washed away by the swelling of the river, or swallowed up in the shifting sands. Several of his men

were drowned in an expedition in quest of gold, and he himself merely escaped by superior swimming. Their provisions were exhausted, they suffered from hunger and from various maladies, and many perished in extreme misery. All were clamorous to abandon the coast, and Olano set about constructing a caravel, out of the wreck of the ships, for the purpose, as he said, of returning to Hispaniola, though many suspected it was still his intention to persist in the enterprise. Such was the state in which the four seamen had found Olano and his party; most of them living in miserable cabins and destitute of the necessaries of life.

The tidings that Nicuesa was still alive put an end to the sway of Olano. Whether he had acted with truth or perfidy, he now manifested a zeal to relieve his commander, and immediately despatched a brigantine in quest of him, which, guided by the four seamen, arrived at the island in the way that has been mentioned.

CHAPTER IV.

Nicuesa rejoins his Crews.

When the crew of the brigantine and the companions of Nicuesa met, they embraced each other with tears, for the hearts even of the rough mariners were subdued by the sorrows they had undergone; and men are rendered kind to each other by a community of suffering. The brigantine had brought a quantity of palm-nuts, and of such other articles of food as they had been able to procure along the coast. These the famished Spaniards devoured with such voracity that Nicuesa was obliged to interfere, lest they should injure themselves. Nor was the supply of fresh water less grateful to their parched and fevered palates.

When sufficiently revived, they all abandoned the desolate island, and set sail for the river Belen, exulting as joyfully as if their troubles were at an end, and they were bound to a haven of delight, instead of merely changing the scene of suffering and encountering a new variety of horrors.

In the meantime Lope de Olano had been diligently preparing for the approaching interview with his commander, by persuading his fellow-officers to intercede in his behalf, and to place his late conduct in the most favourable light. He had need of their intercessions.

Nicuesa arrived, burning with indignation. He ordered him to be instantly seized and punished as a traitor; attributing to his desertion the ruin of the enterprise and the sufferings and death of so many of his brave followers. The fellow-captains of Olano spoke in his favour; but Nicuesa turned indignantly upon them: "You do well," cried he, "to supplicate mercy for him; you who, yourselves, have need of pardon! You have participated in his crime; why, else, have you suffered so long a time to elapse without compelling him to send one of the vessels in search of me?"

The captains vindicated themselves by assurances of their belief in his having foundered at sea. They reiterated their supplications for mercy to Olano; drawing the most affecting pictures of their past and present sufferings, and urging the impolicy of increasing the horrors of their situation by acts of severity. Nicuesa at length was prevailed upon to spare his victim; resolving to send him, by the first opportunity, a prisoner to Spain. It appeared, in truth, no time to add to the daily blows of fate that were thinning the number of his followers. Of the gallant armament of seven hundred resolute and effective men that had sailed with them from San Domingo, four hundred had already perished by various miseries; and, of the survivors, many could scarcely be said to live.

CHAPTER V.

Sufferings of Nicuesa and his Men on the Coast of the Isthmus.

The first care of Nicuesa, on resuming the general command, was to take measures for the relief of his people, who were perishing with famine and disease. All those who were in health, or who had strength sufficient to bear the least fatigue, were sent on foraging parties, among the fields and villages of the natives. It was a service of extreme peril; for the Indians of this part of the coast were fierce and warlike, and were the same who had proved so formidable to Columbus and his brother, when they attempted to found a settlement in this neighbourhood.

Many of the Spaniards were slain in these expeditions. Even if they succeeded in collecting provisions, the toil of bringing them to the harbour was worse to men in their enfeebled condition, than the task of fighting for them;

for they were obliged to transport them on their backs, and, thus heavily laden, to scramble over rugged rocks, through almost impervious forests and across dismal swamps.

Harassed by these perils and fatigues, they broke forth into murmurs against their commander, accusing him, not merely of indifference to their sufferings, but of wantonly imposing severe and unnecessary tasks upon them out of revenge for their having neglected him.

The genial temper of Nicuesa had, in fact, been soured by disappointment; and a series of harassing cares and evils had rendered him irritable and impatient; but he was a cavalier of a generous and honourable nature, and does not appear to have enforced any services that were not indispensable to the common safety. In fact, the famine had increased to such a degree, that, we are told, thirty Spaniards having on one occasion found the dead body of an Indian in a state of decay, they were driven by hunger to make a meal of it, and were so infected by the horrible repast, that not one of them survived. *

Disheartened by these miseries, Nicuesa determined to abandon a place which seemed destined to be the grave of Spaniards. Embarking the greater part of his men in the two brigantines, and the caravel which had been built by Olano, he set sail eastward in search of some more favourable situation for his settlement. A number of the men remained behind, to await the ripening of some maize and vegetables which they had sown. These he left under the command of Alonzo Nuñez, whom he nominated his alcalde mayor.

When Nicuesa had coasted about four leagues to the east, a Genoese sailor, who had been with Columbus in his last voyage, informed him that there was a fine harbour somewhere in that neighbourhood, which had pleased the old admiral so highly, that he had given it the name of Puerto Bello. He added, that they might know the harbour by an anchor, half buried in the sand, which Columbus had left there; near to which was a fountain of remarkably cool and sweet water, springing up at the foot of a large tree. Nicuesa ordered search to be made along the coast, and at length they found the anchor, the fountain, and the tree. It was the same harbour which bears the name of Porto Bello at the present day. A number of the crew were sent on shore in search of provisions, but were assailed by the Indians; and, being too

* Herrera, Hist. Ind., decad. i. and viii. cap. 2.

weak to wield their weapons with their usual prowess, were driven back to the vessels with the loss of several slain or wounded.

Dejected at these continual misfortunes, Nicuesa continued his voyage seven leagues farther, until he came to the harbour to which Columbus had given the name of Puerto de Bastimientos; or, Port of Provisions. It presented an advantageous situation for a fortress, and was surrounded by a fruitful country. Nicuesa resolved to make it his abiding-place. "Here," said he, "let us stop, *en el nombre de Dios!*" (in the name of God). His followers, with the superstitious feeling under which men in adversity are prone to interpret everything into omens, persuaded themselves that there was favourable augury in his words, and called the harbour "Nombre de Dios," which name it afterwards retained.

Nicuesa now landed, and drawing his sword, took solemn possession in the name of the Catholic sovereigns. He immediately began to erect a fortress, to protect his people against the attacks of the savages. As this was a case of exigency, he exacted the labour of every one capable of exertion. The Spaniards, thus equally distressed by famine and toil, forgot their favourable omen, cursed the place as fated to be their grave, and called down imprecations on the head of their commander, who compelled them to labour when ready to sink with hunger and debility. Those murmured no less who were sent in quest of food, which was only to be gained by fatigue and bloodshed; for whatever they collected they had to transport from great distances, and they were frequently waylaid and assaulted by the Indians.

When he could spare men for the purpose, Nicuesa despatched the caravel for those whom he had left at the river Belen. Many of them had perished, and the survivors had been reduced to such famine at times, as to eat all kinds of reptiles, until a part of an alligator was a banquet to them. On mustering all his forces when thus united, Nicuesa found that but one hundred emaciated and dejected wretches remained.

He despatched the caravel to Hispaniola, to bring a quantity of bacon which he had ordered to have prepared there, but it never returned. He ordered Gonzalo de Badajos, at the head of twenty men, to scour the country for provisions; but the Indians had ceased to cultivate: they could do with little food, and could subsist on the roots and wild fruits of the forest. The Spaniards, there-

fore, found deserted villages and barren fields, but lurking enemies at every defile. So deplorably were they reduced by their sufferings, that at length there were not left a sufficient number in health and strength to mount guard at night; and the fortress remained without sentinels. Such was the desperate situation of this once gay and gallant cavalier, and of his brilliant armament, which but a few months before had sailed from San Domingo, flushed with the consciousness of power, and the assurance that they had the means of compelling the favours of fortune.

It is necessary to leave them for a while, and turn our attention to other events which will ultimately be found to bear upon their destinies.

CHAPTER VI.

Expedition of the Bachelor Enciso in search of the Seat of Government of Ojeda.

[1510.]

In calling to mind the narrative of the last expedition of Alonzo de Ojeda, the reader will doubtless remember the Bachelor Martin Fernandez de Enciso, who was inspired by that adventurous cavalier with an ill-starred passion for colonizing, and freighted a vessel at San Domingo with reinforcements and supplies for the settlement at San Sebastian.

When the Bachelor was on the eve of sailing, a number of the loose hangers-on of the colony, and men encumbered with debt, concerted to join his ship from the coast and the outports. Their creditors, however, getting notice of their intention, kept a close watch upon every one that went on board while in the harbour, and obtained an armed vessel from the admiral Don Diego Columbus, to escort the enterprising Bachelor clear of the island. One man, however, contrived to elude these precautions, and, as he afterwards rose to great importance, it is proper to notice him particularly. His name was Vasco Nuñez de Balboa. He was a native of Xeres de los Caballeros, and of a noble though impoverished family. He had been brought up in the service of Don Pedro Puerto Carrero, lord of Moguer, and he afterwards enlisted among the adventurers who accompanied Rodrigo de Bastides in his voyage of discovery. Peter Martyr, in his Latin decades, speaks of him by the appellation of "egregius digladiator," which has been interpreted by some as a skilful

swordsman, by others as an adroit fencing-master. He intimates, also, that he was a mere soldier of fortune, of loose prodigal habits; and the circumstances under which he is first introduced to us justify this character. He had fixed himself for a time in Hispaniola, and undertaken to cultivate a farm at the town of Salvatierra, on the sea-coast, but in a little time had completely involved himself in debt. The expedition of Enciso presented him with an opportunity of escaping from his embarrassments, and of indulging his adventurous habits. To elude the vigilance of his creditors and of the armed escort, he concealed himself in a cask, which was conveyed from his farm on the sea-coast on board of the vessel, as if containing provisions for the voyage. When the vessel was fairly out at sea, and abandoned by the escort, Vasco Nuñez emerged like an apparition from his cask, to the great surprise of Enciso, who had been totally ignorant of the stratagem. The Bachelor was indignant at being thus outwitted, even though he gained a recruit by the deception; and, in the first ebullition of his wrath, gave the fugitive debtor a very rough reception, threatening to put him on shore on the first uninhabited island they should encounter. Vasco Nuñez, however, succeeded in pacifying him, "for God," says the venerable Las Casas, "reserved him for greater things." It is probable the Bachelor beheld in him a man well fitted for his expedition, for Vasco Nuñez was in the prime and vigour of his days, tall and muscular, seasoned to hardships, and of intrepid spirit.

Arriving at the main-land, they touched at the fatal harbour of Carthagena, the scene of the sanguinary conflicts of Ojeda and Nicuesa with the natives, and of the death of the brave Juan de la Cosa. Enciso was ignorant of those events, having had no tidings from those adventurers since their departure from San Domingo; without any hesitation, therefore, he landed a number of his men to repair his boat, which was damaged, and to procure water. While the men were working upon the boat, a multitude of Indians gathered at a distance, well armed and with menacing aspect, sounding their shells and brandishing their weapons. The experience they had had of the tremendous powers of the strangers, however, rendered them cautious of attacking, and for three days they hovered in this manner about the Spaniards, the latter being obliged to keep continually on the alert. At length two of the Spaniards ventured one day from the main body to fill a water-cask from the adjacent river. Scarcely had they

reached the margin of the stream, when eleven savages sprang from the thickets and surrounded them, bending their bows and pointing their arrows. In this way they stood for a moment or two in fearful suspense, the Indians refraining from discharging their shafts, but keeping them constantly pointed at their breasts. One of the Spaniards attempted to escape to his comrades who were repairing the boat, but the other called him back, and, understanding something of the Indian tongue, addressed a few amicable words to the savages. The latter, astonished at being spoken to in their own language, now relaxed a little from their fierceness, and demanded of the strangers who they were, who were their leaders, and what they sought upon their shores. The Spaniard replied that they were harmless people, who came from other lands, and merely touched there through necessity, and he wondered that they should meet them with such hostility; he at the same time warned them to beware, as there would come many of his countrymen well armed, and would wreak terrible vengeance upon them for any mischief they might do. While they were thus parleying, the Bachelor Enciso, hearing that two of his men were surrounded by the savages, sallied instantly from his ship, and hastened with an armed force to their rescue. As he approached, however, the Spaniard who had held the parley made him a signal that the natives were pacific. In fact, the latter had supposed that this was a new invasion of Ojeda and Nicuesa, and had thus arrayed themselves, if not to take vengeance for past outrages, at least to defend their houses from a second desolation. When they were convinced, however, that these were a totally different band of strangers, and without hostile intentions, their animosity was at an end; they threw by their weapons, and came forward with the most confiding frankness. During the whole time that the Spaniards remained there, they treated them with the greatest friendship, supplying them with bread made from maize, with salted fish, and with the fermented and spirituous beverages common along that coast. Such was the magnanimous conduct of men who were considered among the most ferocious and warlike of these savage nations; and who, but recently, had beheld their shores invaded, their villages ravaged and burnt, and their friends and relations butchered, without regard to age or sex, by the countrymen of these very strangers. When we recall the bloody and indiscriminate vengeance wreaked upon this people by Ojeda and his followers for their justifiable resistance of

invasion, and compare it with their placable and considerate spirit when an opportunity for revenge presented itself, we confess we feel a momentary doubt whether the arbitrary appellation of savage is always applied to the right party.

CHAPTER VII.

The Bachelor hears unwelcome Tidings of his destined Jurisdiction.

Not long after the arrival of Enciso at this eventful harbour, he was surprised by the circumstance of a brigantine entering, and coming to anchor. To encounter a European sail in these almost unknown seas was always a singular and striking occurrence, but the astonishment of the Bachelor was mingled with alarm when, on boarding the brigantine, he found it manned by a number of the men who had embarked with Ojeda. His first idea was, that they had mutinied against their commander, and deserted with the vessel. The feelings of the magistrate were aroused within him by the suspicion, and he determined to take his first step as alcalde mayor, by seizing them and inflicting on them the severity of the law. He altered his tone, however, on conversing with their resolute commander. This was no other than Francisco Pizarro, whom Ojeda had left as his locum tenens at San Sebastian, and who showed the Bachelor his letter patent, signed by that unfortunate governor. In fact, the little brigantine contained the sad remnant of the once vaunted colony. After the departure of Ojeda in the pirate ship, his followers, whom he had left behind under the command of Pizarro, continued in the fortress until the stipulated term of fifty days had expired. Receiving no succour, and hearing no tidings of Ojeda, they then determined to embark and sail for Hispaniola; but here an unthought-of difficulty presented itself; they were seventy in number, and the two brigantines which had been left with them were incapable of taking so many. They came to the forlorn agreement, therefore, to remain until famine, sickness, and the poisoned arrows of the Indians should reduce their number to the capacity of the brigantines. A brief space of time was sufficient for the purpose. They then prepared for the voyage. Four mares, which had been kept alive, as terrors to the Indians, were killed and salted for sea-stores. Then taking whatever other articles of provisions remained, they embarked and made sail. One

brigantine was commanded by Pizarro, the other by one Valenzuela.

They had not proceeded far when, in a storm, a sea struck the crazy vessel of Valenzuela with such violence as to cause it to founder with all its crew. The other brigantine was so near that the mariners witnessed the struggles of their drowning companions, and heard their cries. Some of the sailors, with the common disposition to the marvellous, declared that they beheld a great whale, or some other monster of the deep, strike the vessel with its tail, and either stave in its sides or shatter the rudder, so as to cause the shipwreck.* The surviving brigantine then made the best of its way to the harbour of Carthagena, to seek provisions.

Such was the disastrous account rendered to the Bachelor by Pizarro, of his destined jurisdiction. Enciso, however, was of a confident mind and sanguine temperament, and trusted to restore all things to order and prosperity on his arrival.

CHAPTER VIII.

Crusade of the Bachelor Enciso against the Sepulchres of Zenu.

The Bachelor Enciso, as has been shown, was a man of the sword as well as of the robe; having doubtless imbibed a passion for military exploit from his intimacy with the discoverers. Accordingly, while at Carthagena, he was visited by an impulse of the kind, and undertook an enterprise that would have been worthy of his friend Ojeda. He had been told by the Indians that about twenty-five leagues to the west lay a province called Zenu, the mountains of which abounded with the finest gold. This was washed down by torrents during the rainy season, in such quantities, that the natives stretched nets across the rivers to catch the largest particles, some of which were said to be as large as eggs.

The idea of taking gold in nets captivated the imagination of the Bachelor, and his cupidity was still more excited by further accounts of this wealthy province. He was told that Zenu was the general place of sepulture of the Indian tribes throughout the country, whither they brought their dead, and buried them, according to their custom, decorated with their most precious ornaments.

It appeared to him a matter of course, therefore, that

* Herrera, Hist. Ind., decad. i. lib. vii. cap. 10.

there must be an immense accumulation of riches in the Indian tombs, from the golden ornaments that had been buried with the dead through a long series of generations. Fired with the thought, he determined to make a foray into this province, and to sack the sepulchres! Neither did he feel any compunctions at the idea of plundering the dead, considering the deceased as pagans and infidels, who had forfeited even the sanctuary of the grave, by having been buried according to the rites and ceremonies of their idolatrous religion.

Enciso, accordingly, made sail from Carthagena, and landed with his forces on the coast of Zenu. Here he was promptly opposed by two caciques, at the head of a large band of warriors. The Bachelor, though he had thus put on the soldier, retained sufficient of the spirit of his former calling not to enter into quarrel without taking care to have the law on his side; he proceeded regularly, therefore, according to the legal form recently enjoined by the crown. He caused to be read and interpreted to the caciques the same formula used by Ojeda, expounding the nature of the deity, the supremacy of the pope, and the right of the Catholic sovereigns to all these lands, by virtue of a grant from his holiness. The caciques listened to the whole very attentively and without interruption, according to the laws of Indian courtesy. They then replied, that, as to the assertion that there was but one God, the sovereign of heaven and earth, it seemed to them good, and that such must be the case; but as to the doctrine that the pope was regent of the world in place of God, and that he had made a grant of their country to the Spanish king, they observed that the pope must have been drunk to give away what was not his, and the king must have been somewhat mad to ask at his hands what belonged to others. They added, that they were lords of those lands, and needed no other sovereign, and if this king should come to take possession, they would cut off his head and put it on a pole, that being their mode of dealing with their enemies. As an illustration of this custom, they pointed out to Enciso the very uncomfortable spectacle of a row of grisly heads impaled in the neighbourhood.

Nothing daunted either by the reply or the illustration, the Bachelor menaced them with war and slavery as the consequences of their refusal to believe and submit. They replied by threatening to put his head upon a pole as a representative of his sovereign. The Bachelor having furnished them with the law, now proceeded to the com-

mentary. He attacked the Indians, routed them, and took one of the caciques prisoner, but in the skirmish two of his men were slightly wounded with poisoned arrows, and died raving with torment.*

It does not appear, however, that his crusade against the sepulchres was attended with any lucrative advantage. Perhaps the experience he had received of the hostility of the natives, and of the fatal effects of their poisoned arrows, prevented his penetrating into the land with his scanty force. Certain it is, the reputed wealth of Zenu, and the tale of its fishery for gold with nets, remained unascertained and uncontradicted, and were the cause of subsequent and disastrous enterprises. The Bachelor contented himself with his victory, and returning to his ships, prepared to continue his voyage for the seat of government established by Ojeda in the Gulf of Uraba.

CHAPTER IX.

The Bachelor arrives at San Sebastian—His Disasters there, and subsequent Exploits at Darien.

It was not without extreme difficulty, and the peremptory exercise of his authority as alcalde mayor, that Enciso prevailed upon the crew of Pizarro to return with him to the fated shores of San Sebastian. He at length arrived in sight of the long wished-for seat of his anticipated power and authority; but here he was doomed like his principal, Ojeda, to meet with nothing but misfortune. On entering the harbour, his vessel struck on a rock on the eastern point. The rapid currents and tumultuous waves rent it to pieces; the crew escaped with great difficulty to the brigantine of Pizarro; a little flour, cheese, and biscuit, and a small part of the arms were saved, but the horses, mares, swine and all other colonial supplies were swept away, and the unfortunate Bachelor beheld the proceeds of several years of prosperous litigation swallowed up in an instant.

* The above anecdote is related by the Bachelor Encisco himself, in a geographical work entitled *Suma de Geographia*, which he published in Seville, in 1519. As the reply of the poor savages contains something of natural logic, we give a part of it as reported by the Bachelor:—"Respondieron me: que en lo que dezia que no avia sino un dios, y que este governaba el cielo y la tierra, y que era senor de todo, que les parecia y que asi debia ser: pero que en lo que dezia que el papa era senor de todo el universo en lugar de dios, y que el avia fecho merced de aquella tierra al rey de Castilla; dixeron que el papa debiera estar boracho quando lo hizo, pues daba lo que no era suyo, y que el rey que pedia y tomava tal merced debia ser algun loco pues pedia lo que era de otros," &c.

His dream of place and dignity seemed equally on the point of vanishing; for, on landing, he found the fortress and its adjacent houses mere heaps of ruins, having been destroyed with fire by the Indians.

For a few days the Spaniards maintained themselves with palm nuts, and with the flesh of a kind of wild swine, of which they met with several herds. These supplies failing, the Bachelor sallied forth with a hundred men to forage the country. They were waylaid by three Indians, who discharged all the arrows in their quivers with incredible rapidity, wounded several Spaniards, and then fled with a swiftness that defied pursuit. The Spaniards returned to the harbour in dismay. All their dread of the lurking savages and their poisoned weapons revived, and they insisted upon abandoning a place marked out for disaster.

The Bachelor Enciso was himself disheartened at the situation of this boasted capital of San Sebastian;—but whither could he go where the same misfortunes might not attend him? In this moment of doubt and despondency, Vasco Nuñez, the same absconding debtor who had been smuggled on board in the cask, stepped forward to give counsel. He informed the Bachelor that several years previous he had sailed along that coast with Rodrigo de Bastides. They had explored the whole Gulf of Uraba; and he well remembered an Indian village situated on the western side on the banks of a river which the natives called Darien. The country around was fertile and abundant, and was said to possess mines of gold; and the natives, though a warlike race, never made use of poisoned weapons. He offered to guide the Bachelor to this place, where they might get a supply of provisions, and even found their colony.

The Spaniards hailed the words of Vasco Nuñez as if revealing a land of promise. The Bachelor adopted his advice, and, guided by him, set sail for the village, determined to eject the inhabitants and take possession of it as the seat of government. Arrived at the river, he landed, put his men in martial array, and marched along the banks. The place was governed by a brave cacique named Zemaco. He sent off the women and children to a place of safety, and posting himself with five hundred of his warriors on a height, prepared to give the intruders a warm reception. The Bachelor was a discoverer at all points; pious, daring, and rapacious. On beholding this martial array, he recommended himself and his followers

to God, making a vow in their name to "Our Lady of Antigua," whose image is adored with great devotion in Seville, that the first church and town which they built should be dedicated to her, and that they would make a pilgrimage to Seville to offer the spoils of the heathen at her shrine. Having thus endeavoured to propitiate the favour of Heaven, and to retain the Holy Virgin in his cause, he next proceeded to secure the fidelity of his followers. Doubting that they might have some lurking dread of poisoned arrows, he exacted from them all an oath that they would not turn their backs upon the foe, whatever might happen. Never did warrior enter into battle with more preliminary forms and covenants than the Bachelor Enciso. All these points being arranged, he assumed the soldier, and attacked the enemy with such valour, that, though they made at first a show of fierce resistance, they were soon put to flight, and many of them slain. The Bachelor entered the village in triumph, took possession of it by unquestionable right of conquest, and plundered all the hamlets and houses of the surrounding country; collecting great quantities of food and cotton, with bracelets, anklets, plates and other ornaments of gold, to the value of ten thousand castellanos.* His heart was wonderfully elated by his victory and his booty; his followers, also, after so many hardships and disasters, gave themselves up to joy at this turn of good fortune, and it was unanimously agreed that the seat of government should be established in this village; to which, in fulfilment of his vow, Enciso gave the name of Santa Maria de la Antigua del Darien.

CHAPTER X.

The Bachelor Enciso undertakes the Command—His Downfall.

The Bachelor Enciso now entered upon the exercise of his civil functions as alcalde mayor, and lieutenant of the absent governor, Ojeda. His first edict was stern and peremptory; he forbade all trafficking with the natives for gold, on private account, under pain of death. This was in conformity to royal command; but it was little palatable to men who had engaged in the enterprise in the hopes of enjoying free trade, lawless liberty, and golden gains. They murmured among themselves, and insinuated that Enciso intended to reserve all the profit to himself.

* Equivalent to a present sum of 53,259 dollars.

Vasco Nuñez was the first to take advantage of the general discontent. He had risen to consequence among his fellow-adventurers, from having guided them to this place, and from his own intrinsic qualities, being hardy, bold, and intelligent, and possessing the random spirit and open-handed generosity common to a soldier of fortune, and calculated to dazzle and delight the multitude.

He bore no good will to the Bachelor, recollecting his threat of landing him on an uninhabited island, when he escaped in a cask from San Domingo. He sought, therefore, to make a party against him, and to unseat him from his command. He attacked him in his own way, with legal weapons, questioning the legitimacy of his pretensions. The boundary-line, he observed, which separated the jurisdictions of Ojeda and Nicuesa, ran through the centre of the Gulf of Uraba. The village of Darien lay on the western side, which had been allotted to Nicuesa. Enciso, therefore, as alcalde mayor and lieutenant of Ojeda, could have no jurisdiction here, and his assumed authority was a sheer usurpation.

The Spaniards, already incensed at the fiscal regulations of Enciso, were easily convinced; so with one accord they refused allegiance to him; and the unfortunate Bachelor found the chair of authority to which he had so fondly and anxiously aspired, suddenly wrested from under him, before he had well time to take his seat.

CHAPTER XI.

Perplexities at the Colony—Arrival of Colmenares.

To depose the Bachelor had been an easy matter, for most men are ready to assist in pulling down; but to choose a successor was a task of far more difficulty. The people at first agreed to elect mere civil magistrates, and accordingly appointed Vasco Nuñez and one Zamudio as alcaldes, together with a cavalier of some merit of the name of Valdivia, as regidor. They soon, however, became dissatisfied with this arrangement, and it was generally considered advisable to vest the authority in one person. Who this person should be was now the question. Some proposed Nicuesa, as they were within his province; others were strenuous for Vasco Nuñez. A violent dispute ensued, which was carried on with such heat and obstinacy, that many, anxious for a quiet life,

declared it would be better to reinstate Enciso until the pleasure of the king should be known.

In the height of these factious altercations the Spaniards were aroused one day by the thundering of cannon from the opposite side of the gulf, and beheld columns of smoke rising from the hills. Astonished at signals of civilized man on these wild shores, they replied in the same manner, and in a short time two ships were seen standing across the gulf. They proved to be an armament commanded by one Rodrigo de Colmenares, and were in search of Nicuesa with supplies. They had met with the usual luck of adventurers on this disastrous coast, storms at sea and savage foes on shore, and many of their number had fallen by poisoned arrows. Colmenares had touched at San Sebastian to learn tidings of Nicuesa; but, finding the fortress in ruins, had made signals, in hopes of being heard by the Spaniards, should they be yet lingering in the neighbourhood.

The arrival of Colmenares caused a temporary suspension of the feuds of the colonists. He distributed provisions among them, and gained their hearts. Then, representing the legitimate right of Nicuesa to the command of all that part of the coast as a governor appointed by the king, he persuaded the greater part of the people to acknowledge his authority. It was generally agreed, therefore, that he should cruise along the coast in search of Nicuesa, and that Diego de Albitez, and an active member of the law, called the Bachelor Corral, should accompany him as ambassadors, to invite that cavalier to come and assume the government of Darien.

CHAPTER XII.

Colmenares goes in quest of Nicuesa.

Rodrigo de Colmenares proceeded along the coast to the westward, looking into every bay and harbour, but for a long time without success. At length one day he discovered a brigantine at a small island in the sea. It was part of the armament of Nicuesa, and had been sent out by him to forage for provisions. By this vessel he was piloted to the port of Nombre de Dios, the nominal capital of the unfortunate governor, but which was so surrounded and overshadowed by forests, that he might have passed by without noticing it.

The arrival of Colmenares was welcomed with transports and tears of joy. It was scarcely possible for him to recognize the once buoyant and brilliant Nicuesa in the squalid and dejected man before him. He was living in the most abject misery. Of all his once gallant and powerful band of followers, but sixty men remained, and those so feeble, yellow, emaciated, and wobegone, that it was piteous to behold them.*

Colmenares distributed food among them, and told them that he had come to convey them to a plenteous country, and one rich in gold. When Nicuesa heard of the settlement at Darien, and that the inhabitants had sent for him to come and govern them, he was as a man suddenly revived from death. All the spirit and munificence of the cavalier again awakened in him. He gave a kind of banquet that very day to Colmenares and the ambassadors, from the provisions brought in the ship. He presided at his table with his former hilarity, and displayed a feat of his ancient office as royal carver, by holding up a fowl in the air and dissecting it with wonderful adroitness.

Well would it have been for Nicuesa had the sudden buoyancy of his feelings carried him no further; but adversity had not taught him prudence. In conversing with the envoys about the colony of Darien, he already assumed the tone of governor, and began to disclose the kind of policy with which he intended to rule. When he heard that great quantities of gold had been collected and retained by private individuals, his ire was kindled. He vowed to make them refund it, and even talked of punishing them for trespassing upon the privileges and monopolies of the crown. This was the very error that had unseated the Bachelor Enciso from his government, and it was a strong measure for one to threaten who as yet was governor but in expectation. The menace was not lost upon the watchful ambassadors Diego de Albitez and the Bachelor Corral. They were put still more on the alert by a conversation held that very evening with Lope de

* The harbour of Nombre de Dios continued for a long time to present traces of the sufferings of the Spaniards. We are told by Herrera, that several years after the time here mentioned, a band of eighty Spanish soldiers, commanded by Gonzalo de Badajos, arrived in the harbour with an intention of penetrating into the interior. They found there the ruined fort of Nicuesa, together with skulls and bones, and crosses erected on heaps of stones, dismal mementos of his followers who had perished of hunger; the sight of which struck such horror and dismay into the hearts of the soldiers that they would have abandoned their enterprise, had not their intrepid captain immediately sent away the ships, and thus deprived them of the means of retreating.—Herrera, decad. xi. lib. i.

Olano, who was still detained a prisoner for his desertion, but who found means to commune with the envoys, and to prejudice them against his unsuspecting commander. "Take warning," said he, "by my treatment. I sent relief to Nicuesa and rescued him from death when starving on a desert island. Behold my recompense. He repays me with imprisonment and chains. Such is the gratitude the people of Darien may look for at his hands!"

The subtle Bachelor Corral and his fellow-envoy laid these matters to heart, and took their measures accordingly. They hurried to depart before Nicuesa, and setting all sail on their caravel, hastened back to Darien. The moment they arrived they summoned a meeting of the principal inhabitants. "A blessed change we have made," said they, "in summoning this Diego de Nicuesa to the command! We have called in the stork to take the rule, who will not rest satisfied until he has devoured us." They then related, with the usual exaggeration, the unguarded threats which had fallen from Nicuesa, and instanced his treatment of Olano as a proof of a tyrannous and ungrateful disposition.

The words of the subtle Bachelor Corral and his associate produced a violent agitation among the people, especially among those who had amassed treasures, which would have to be refunded. Nicuesa, too, by a transaction which almost destroys sympathy in his favour, gave time for their passions to ferment. On his way to Darien he stopped for several days among a group of small islands, for the purpose of capturing Indians to be sold as slaves. While committing these outrages against humanity, he sent forward Juan de Cayzedo in a boat to announce his coming. His messenger had a private pique against him, and played him false. He assured the people of Darien that all they had been told by their envoys concerning the tyranny and ingratitude of Nicuesa was true;—that he treated his followers with wanton severity; that he took from them all they won in battle, saying that the spoils were his rightful property; and that it was his intention to treat the people of Darien in the same manner. "What folly is it in you," added he, "being your own masters, and in such free condition, to send for a tyrant to rule over you!"

The people of Darien were convinced by this concurring testimony, and confounded by the overwhelming evil they had thus invoked upon their heads. They had deposed Enciso for his severity, and they had thrown themselves into the power of one who threatened to be ten times more

severe! Vasco Nuñez de Balboa observed their perplexity and consternation. He drew them one by one apart, and conversed with them in private. "You are cast down in heart," said he, "and so you might well be, were the evil beyond all cure. But do not despair; there is an effectual relief, and you hold it in your hands. If you have committed an error in inviting Nicuesa to Darien, it is easily remedied by not receiving him when he comes!" The obviousness and simplicity of the remedy struck every mind, and it was unanimously adopted.

CHAPTER XIII.

Catastrophe of the unfortunate Nicuesa.

While this hostile plot was maturing at Darien, the unsuspecting Nicuesa pursued his voyage leisurely and serenely, and arrived in safety at the mouth of the river. On approaching the shore, he beheld a multitude, headed by Vasco Nuñez, waiting, as he supposed, to receive him with all due honour. He was about to land, when the public procurator, or attorney, called to him with a loud voice, warning him not to disembark, but to return with all speed to his government at Nombre de Dios.

Nicuesa remained for a moment as if thunderstruck by so unlooked-for a salutation. When he recovered his self-possession, he reminded them that he had come at their own request; he entreated, therefore, that he might be allowed to land and have an explanation, after which he would be ready to act as they should think proper. His entreaties only provoked insolent replies, and threats of violence should he venture to put foot on shore. Night coming on, he was obliged to stand out to sea, but returned the next morning, hoping to find this capricious people in a different mood.

There did, indeed, appear to be a favourable change, for he was now invited to land. It was a mere stratagem to get him in their power, for no sooner did he set foot on shore than the multitude rushed forward to seize him. Among his many bodily endowments, Nicuesa was noted for swiftness of foot. He now trusted to it for safety, and, throwing off the dignity of governor, fled for his life along the shore, pursued by the rabble. He soon distanced his pursuers, and took refuge in the woods.

Vasco Nuñez de Balboa, who was himself a man of birth, seeing this high-bred cavalier reduced to such extre-

mity, and at the mercy of a violent rabble, repented of what he had done. He had not anticipated such popular fury, and endeavoured, though too late, to allay the tempest he had raised. He succeeded in preventing the people from pursuing Nicuesa into the forest, and then endeavoured to mollify the vindictive rage of his fellow-alcalde, Zamudio, whose hostility was quickened by the dread of losing his office, should the new governor be received; and who was supported in his boisterous conduct by the natural love of the multitude for what are called "strong measures." Nicuesa now held a parley with the populace, through the mediation of Vasco Nuñez. He begged that, if they would not acknowledge him as governor, they would at least admit him as a companion. This they refused, saying, that if they admitted him in one capacity, he would end by attaining to the other. He then implored that, if he could be admitted on no other terms, they would treat him as a prisoner, and put him in irons, for he would rather die among them than return to Nombre de Dios, to perish of famine, or by the arrows of the Indians.

It was in vain that Vasco Nuñez exerted his eloquence to obtain some grace for this unhappy cavalier. His voice was drowned by the vociferations of the multitude. Among these was a noisy swaggering fellow named Francisco Benitez, a great talker and jester, who took a vulgar triumph in the distresses of a cavalier, and answered every plea in his behalf with scoffs and jeers. He was an adherent of the alcalde Zamudio, and under his patronage felt emboldened to bluster. His voice was ever uppermost in the general clamour, until, to the expostulations of Vasco Nuñez, he replied by merely bawling, with great vociferation, "No, no, no!—we will receive no such a fellow among us as Nicuesa!" The patience of Vasco Nuñez was exhausted; he availed himself of his authority as alcalde, and suddenly, before his fellow-magistrate could interfere, ordered the brawling ruffian to be rewarded with a hundred lashes, which were tailed out roundly to him upon the shoulders.*

Seeing that the fury of the populace was not to be pacified, he sent word to Nicuesa to retire to his brigantine, and not to venture on shore until advised by him to do so. The counsel was fruitless. Nicuesa, above deceit himself, suspected it not in others. He retired to his brigantines, it is true, but suffered himself to be inveigled on shore by

* Las Casas, Hist. Ind., lib. ii. cap. 68.

a deputation professing to come on the part of the public, with offers to reinstate him as governor. He had scarcely landed when he was set upon by an armed band, headed by the base-minded Zamudio, who seized him and compelled him, by menaces of death, to swear that he would immediately depart, and make no delay in any place until he had presented himself before the king and council in Castile.

In vain Nicuesa reminded them that he was governor of that territory and representative of the king, and that they were guilty of treason in thus opposing him; in vain he appealed to their humanity, or protested before God against their cruelty and persecution. The people were in that state of tumult when they are apt to add cruelty to injustice. Not content with expelling the discarded governor from their shores, they allotted him the worst vessel in the harbour; an old crazy brigantine, totally unfit to encounter the perils and labours of the sea.

Seventeen followers embarked with him; some being of his household and attached to his person; the rest were volunteers, who accompanied him out of respect and sympathy. The frail bark set sail on the 1st of March, 1511, and steered across the Caribbean Sea for the island of Hispaniola, but was never seen or heard of more!

Various attempts have been made to penetrate the mystery that covers the fate of the brigantine and its crew. A rumour prevailed some years afterwards, that several Spaniards, wandering along the shore of Cuba, found the following inscription carved on a tree:—

Aqui feneciò el desdichado Nicuesa.*

Hence it was inferred that he and his followers had landed there, and been massacred by the Indians. Las Casas, however, discredits this story. He accompanied the first Spaniards who took possession of Cuba, and heard nothing of the fact, as he most probably would have done had it really occurred. He imagines, rather, that the crazy bark was swallowed up by the storms and currents of the Caribbean Sea, or that the crew perished with hunger and thirst, having been but scantily supplied with provisions. The good old bishop adds, with the superstitious feeling prevalent in that age, that a short time before Nicuesa sailed from Spain on his expedition, an astrologer warned him not to depart on the day he had appointed, or under a certain sign; the cavalier replied, however, that he had less

* Here perished the unfortunate Nicuesa.

confidence in the stars than in God who made them. "I recollect, moreover," adds Las Casas, "that about this time a comet was seen over this island of Hispaniola, which, if I do not forget, was in the shape of a sword; and it was said that a monk warned several of those about to embark with Nicuesa, to avoid that captain, for the heavens foretold he was destined to be lost. The same, however," he concludes, "might be said of Alonzo de Ojeda, who sailed at the same time, yet returned to San Domingo and died in his bed."*

VASCO NUÑEZ DE BALBOA,

DISCOVERER OF THE PACIFIC OCEAN.

CHAPTER I.

Factions of Darien—Vasco Nunez elevated to the Command.

We have traced the disastrous fortunes of Alonzo de Ojeda and Diego de Nicuesa;—we have now to record the story of Vasco Nuñez de Balboa, an adventurer equally daring, far more renowned, and not less unfortunate, who in a manner rose upon their ruins.

When the bark disappeared from view which bore the ill-starred Nicuesa from the shores of Darien, the community relapsed into factions, as to who should have the rule. The Bachelor Enciso insisted upon his claims as paramount, but met with a powerful opponent in Vasco Nuñez, who had become a great favourite with the people, from his frank and fearless character, and his winning affability. In fact, he was peculiarly calculated to manage the fiery and factious, yet generous and susceptible, nature of his countrymen; for the Spaniards, though proud and resentful, and impatient of indignity or restraint, are easily dazzled by valour, and won by courtesy and kindness. Vasco Nuñez had the external requisites also to captivate the multitude. He was now about thirty-five years of age; tall, well formed, and vigorous, with reddish hair, and an open prepossessing countenance. His office of alcalde, while it clothed him with influence and importance, tempered those irregular and dissolute habits he might have indulged while a mere soldier of fortune;

* Las Casas, ut sup. cap. 68.

and his superior talent soon gave him a complete ascendancy over his official colleague Zamudio. He was thus enabled to set on foot a vigorous opposition to Enciso. Still he proceeded according to the forms of law, and summoned the Bachelor to trial, on the charge of usurping the powers of alcalde mayor, on the mere appointment of Alonzo de Ojeda, whose jurisdiction did not extend to this province.

Enciso was an able lawyer, and pleaded his cause skilfully; but his claims were, in fact, fallacious, and, had they not been so, he had to deal with men who cared little for law; who had been irritated by his legal exactions, and who were disposed to be governed by a man of the sword rather than of the robe. He was readily found guilty, therefore, and thrown into prison, and all his property was confiscated. This was a violent verdict, and rashly executed; but justice seemed to grow fierce and wild when transplanted to the wilderness of the New World. Still there is no place where wrong can be committed with impunity; the oppression of the Bachelor Enciso, though exercised under the forms of law, and in a region remote from the pale of civilized life, redounded to the eventful injury of Vasco Nuñez, and contributed to blast the fruits of that ambition it was intended to promote.

The fortunes of the enterprising Bachelor had indeed run strangely counter to the prospects with which he had embarked at San Domingo; he had become a culprit at the bar instead of a judge upon the bench; and now was left to ruminate in a prison on the failure of his late attempt at general command. His friends, however, interceded warmly in his behalf, and at length obtained his release from confinement, and permission for him to return to Spain. Vasco Nuñez foresaw that the lawyer would be apt to plead his cause more effectually at the court of Castile than he had done before the partial and prejudiced tribunal of Darien. He prevailed upon his fellow-alcalde Zamudio, therefore, who was implicated with him in the late transactions, to return to Spain in the same vessel with the Bachelor, so as to be on the spot to answer his charges, and to give a favourable report of the case. He was also instructed to set forth the services of Vasco Nuñez, both in guiding the colonists to this place, and in managing the affairs of the settlement; and to dwell with emphasis on the symptoms of great riches in the surrounding country.

The Bachelor and the alcalde embarked in a small caravel; and, as it was to touch at Hispaniola, Vasco Nuñez sent his confidential friend, the regidor Valdivia, to that island to obtain provisions and recruits. He secretly put into his hands a round sum of gold as a present to Miguel de Pasamonte, the royal treasurer of Hispaniola, whom he knew to have great credit with the king, and to be invested with extensive powers, craving at the same time his protection in the New World and his influence at court.

Having taken these shrewd precautions, Vasco Nuñez saw the caravel depart without dismay, though bearing to Spain his most dangerous enemy; he consoled himself, moreover, with the reflection that it likewise bore off his fellow-alcalde Zamudio, and thus left him in sole command of the colony.

CHAPTER II.

Expedition to Coyba—Vasco Nunez receives the Daughter of a Cacique as Hostage.

Vasco Nunez now exerted himself to prove his capacity for the government to which he had aspired; and as he knew that no proof was more convincing to King Ferdinand than ample remittances, and that gold covered all sins in the New World, his first object was to discover those parts of the country which most abounded in the precious metals. Hearing exaggerated reports of the riches of a province about thirty leagues distant, called Coyba, he sent Francisco Pizarro with six men to explore it.

The cacique Zemaco, the native lord of Darien, who cherished a bitter hostility against the European intruders, and hovered with his warriors about the settlement, received notice of this detachment from his spies, and planted himself in ambush to waylay and destroy it. The Spaniards had scarcely proceeded three leagues along the course of the river when a host of savages burst upon them from the surrounding thickets, uttering frightful yells, and discharging showers of stones and arrows. Pizarro and his men, though sorely bruised and wounded, rushed into the thickest of the foe, slew many, wounded more, and put the rest to flight; but fearing another assault, made a precipitate retreat, leaving one of their companions, Francisco Hernan, disabled on the field. They arrived at the settlement crippled and bleeding;

but when Vasco Nuñez heard the particulars of the action, his anger was roused against Pizarro, and he ordered him, though wounded, to return immediately and recover the disabled man. "Let it not be said, for shame," said he, "that Spaniards fled before savages, and left a comrade in their hands!" Pizarro felt the rebuke, returned to the scene of combat, and brought off Francisco Hernan in safety.

Nothing having been heard of Nicuesa since his departure, Vasco Nuñez despatched two brigantines for those followers of that unfortunate adventurer who had remained at Nombre de Dios. They were overjoyed at being rescued from their forlorn situation, and conveyed to a settlement where there was some prospect of comfortable subsistence. The brigantines, in coasting the shores of the Isthmus, picked up two Spaniards, clad in painted skins, and looking as wild as the native Indians. These men, to escape some punishment, had fled from the ship of Nicuesa about a year and a half before, and taken refuge with Careta, the cacique of Coyba. The savage chieftain had treated them with hospitable kindness; their first return for which, now that they found themselves safe among their countrymen, was to advise the latter to invade the cacique in his dwelling, where they assured them they would find immense booty. Finding their suggestions listened to, one of them proceeded to Darien, to serve as a guide to any expedition that might be set on foot; the other returned to the cacique, to assist in betraying him.

Vasco Nuñez was elated by the intelligence received through these vagabonds of the wilderness. He chose a hundred and thirty well-armed and resolute men, and set off for Coyba. The cacique received the Spaniards in his mansion with the accustomed hospitality of a savage, setting before them meat and drink, and whatever his house afforded; but when Vasco Nuñez asked for a large supply of provisions for the colony, he declared that he had none to spare, his people having been prevented from cultivating the soil by a war which he was waging with the neighbouring cacique of Ponca. The Spanish outcast, who had remained to betray his benefactor, now took Vasco Nuñez aside, and assured him that the cacique had an abundant hoard of provisions in secret; he advised him, however, to seem to believe his words, and to make a pretended departure for Darien with his troops, but to return in the night and take the village by surprise.

Vasco Nuñez adopted the advice of the traitor. He took a cordial leave of Careta, and set off for the settlement. In the dead of the night, however, when the savages were buried in deep sleep, Vasco Nuñez led his men into the midst of the village, and, before the inhabitants could rouse themselves to resistance, made captives of Careta, his wives, and children, and many of his people. He discovered also the hoard of provisions, with which he loaded two brigantines, and returned with his booty and his captives to Darien.

When the unfortunate cacique beheld his family in chains and in the hands of strangers, his heart was wrung with despair; "What have I done," said he to Vasco Nuñez, "that thou shouldst treat me thus cruelly? None of thy people ever came to my land that were not fed, and sheltered, and treated with loving-kindness. When thou camest to my dwelling, did I meet thee with a javelin in my hand? Did I not set meat and drink before thee, and welcome thee as a brother? Set me free, therefore, with my family and people, and we will remain thy friends. We will supply thee with provisions, and reveal to thee the riches of the land. Dost thou doubt my faith? Behold my daughter, I give her to thee as a pledge of friendship. Take her for thy wife, and be assured of the fidelity of her family and her people!"

Vasco Nuñez felt the force of these words, and knew the importance of forming a strong alliance among the natives. The captive maid, also, as she stood trembling and dejected before him, found great favour in his eyes, for she was young and beautiful. He granted, therefore, the prayer of the cacique, and accepted his daughter, engaging, moreover, to aid the father against his enemies, on condition of his furnishing provisions to the colony.

Careta remained three days at Darien, during which time he was treated with the utmost kindness. Vasco Nuñez took him on board of his ships, and showed him every part of them. He displayed before him also the war-horses, with their armour and rich caparisons, and astonished him with the thunder of artillery. Lest he should be too much daunted by these warlike spectacles, he caused the musicians to perform an harmonious concert on their instruments, at which the cacique was lost in admiration. Thus having impressed him with a wonderful idea of the power and endowments of his new allies, he loaded him with presents, and permitted him to depart.*

* P. Martyr, decad. iii. cap. 6.

Careta returned joyfully to his territories, and his daughter remained with Vasco Nuñez, willingly for his sake giving up her family and native home. They were never married, but she considered herself his wife, as she really was, according to the usages of her own country; and he treated her with fondness, allowing her gradually to acquire great influence over him. To his affection for this damsel, his ultimate ruin is in some measure to be ascribed.

CHAPTER III.

Vasco Nunez hears of a Sea beyond the Mountains.

Vasco Nunez kept his word with the father of his Indian beauty. Taking with him eighty men, and his companion in arms Rodrigo Enriquez de Colmenares, he repaired by sea to Coyba, the province of the cacique. Here landing, he invaded the territories of Ponca, the great adversary of Careta, and obliged him to take refuge in the mountains. He then ravaged his lands, and sacked his villages, in which he found considerable booty. Returning to Coyba, where he was joyfully entertained by Careta, he next made a friendly visit to the adjacent province of Comagre, which was under the sway of a cacique, of the same name, who had 3,000 fighting men at his command.

This province was situated at the foot of a lofty mountain in a beautiful plain, twelve leagues in extent. On the approach of Vasco Nuñez, the cacique came forth to meet him, attended by seven sons, all fine young men, the offspring of his various wives. He was followed by his principal chiefs and warriors, and by a multitude of his people. The Spaniards were conducted with great ceremony to the village, where quarters were assigned them, and they were furnished with abundance of provisions, and men and women were appointed to attend upon them.

The dwelling of the cacique surpassed any they had yet seen for magnitude, and for the skill and solidity of the architecture. It was one hundred and fifty paces in length, and eighty in breadth, founded upon great logs, surrounded with a stone wall; while the upper part was of wood-work, curiously interwoven, and wrought with such beauty as to cause surprise and admiration. It contained many commodious apartments. There were store-

rooms also; one filled with bread, with venison, and other provisions; another with various sprituous beverages, which the Indians made from maize, from a species of the palm, and from roots of different kinds. There was also a great hall in a retired and secret part of the building, wherein Comagre preserved the bodies of his ancestors and relatives. These had been dried by the fire, so as to free them from corruption, and afterwards wrapped in mantles of cotton, richly wrought and interwoven with pearls and jewels of gold, and with certain stones held precious by the natives. They were then hung about the hall with cords of cotton, and regarded with great reverence, if not with religious devotion.

The eldest son of the cacique was of a lofty and generous spirit, and distinguished above the rest by his superior intelligence and sagacity. Perceiving, says old Peter Martyr, that the Spaniards were a "wandering kind of men, living only by shifts and spoil," he sought to gain favour for himself and family by gratifying their avarice. He gave Vasco Nuñez and Colmenares, therefore, 4,000 ounces of gold, wrought into various ornaments, together with sixty slaves, captives taken in the wars. Vasco Nuñez ordered one-fifth of the gold to be weighed out and set apart for the crown, and the rest to be shared among his followers.

The division of the gold took place in the porch of the dwelling of Comagre, in the presence of the youthful cacique who had made the gift. As the Spaniards were weighing it out, a violent quarrel arose among them as to the size and value of the pieces which fell to their respective shares. The high-minded savage was disgusted at this sordid brawl among beings whom he had regarded with such reverence. In the first impulse of his disdain, he struck the scales with his fist, and scattered the glittering gold about the porch. "Why," said he, "should you quarrel for such a trifle? If this gold is indeed so precious in your eyes, that for it alone you abandon your homes, invade the peaceful lands of others, and expose yourselves to such sufferings and perils, I will tell you of a region where you may gratify your wishes to the utmost. Behold those lofty mountains," continued he, pointing to the south; "beyond these lies a mighty sea, which may be discerned from their summit. It is navigated by people who have vessels almost as large as yours, and furnished, like them with sails and oars. All the streams which flow down the southern side of those mountains into that sea

abound in gold; and the kings who reign upon its borders eat and drink out of golden vessels. Gold, in fact, is as plentiful and common among those people of the south as iron is among you Spaniards."

Vasco Nuñez inquired eagerly as to the means of penetrating to this sea and to the opulent regions on its shores. "The task," replied the prince, "is difficult and dangerous. You must pass through the territories of many powerful caciques, who will oppose you with hosts of warriors. Some parts of the mountains are infested by fierce and cruel cannibals, a wandering lawless race; but, above all, you will have to encounter the great cacique Tubanamà, whose territories are at the distance of six days' journey, and more rich in gold than any other province; this cacique will be sure to come forth against you with a mighty force. To accomplish your enterprise, therefore, will require at least a thousand men armed like those who follow you."

The youthful cacique gave him further information on the subject, collected from various captives taken in battle, and from one of his own nation, who had been for a long time in captivity to Tubanamà, the powerful cacique of the golden realm. He moreover offered to prove the sincerity of his words by accompanying Vasco Nuñez, in any expedition to those parts, at the head of his father's warriors.

Such was the first intimation received by Vasco Nuñez of the Pacific Ocean and its golden realms, and it had an immediate effect upon his whole character and conduct. This hitherto wandering and desperate man had now an enterprise opened to his ambition, which, if accomplished, would elevate him to fame and fortune, and entitle him to rank among the great captains and discoverers of the earth. Henceforth the discovery of the sea beyond the mountains was the great object of his thoughts, and his whole spirit seemed roused and ennobled by the idea.

He hastened his return to Darien, to make the necessary preparations for this splendid enterprise. Before departing from the province of Comagre, he baptized that cacique by the name of Don Carlos, and performed the same ceremony upon his sons and several of his subjects;—thus singularly did avarice and religion go hand in hand in the conduct of the Spanish discoverers.

Scarcely had Vasco Nuñez returned to Darien, when the Regidor Valdivia arrived from Hispaniola, but with no more provisions than could be brought in his small

caravel. These were soon consumed, and the general scarcity continued. It was heightened by a violent tempest of thunder, lightning, and rain, which brought such torrents from the mountains that the river swelled and overflowed its banks, laying waste all the adjacent fields which had been cultivated. In this extremity Vasco Nuñez despatched Valdivia a second time to Hispaniola for provisions. Animated also by the loftier views of his present ambition, he wrote to Don Diego Columbus, who governed at San Domingo, informing him of the intelligence he had received of a great sea and opulent realms beyond the mountains, and entreating him to use his influence with the king that one thousand men might be immediately furnished him for the prosecution of so grand a discovery. He sent him also the amount of fifteen thousand crowns in gold, to be remitted to the king as the royal fifths of what had already been collected under his jurisdiction. Many of his followers, likewise, forwarded sums of gold to be remitted to their creditors in Spain. In the meantime Vasco Nuñez prayed the admiral to yield him prompt succour to enable him to keep his footing in the land, representing the difficulty he had in maintaining, with a mere handful of men, so vast a country in a state of subjection.

CHAPTER IV.

Expedition of Vasco Nunez in quest of the Golden Temple of Dobayba.

[1512.]

While Vasco Nuñez awaited the result of this mission of Valdivia, his active disposition prompted foraging excursions into the surrounding country.

Among various rumours of golden realms in the interior of this unknown land, was one concerning a province called Dobayba, situated about forty leagues distant, on the banks of a great river which emptied itself, by several mouths, into a corner of the Gulf of Uraba.

This province derived its name, according to Indian tradition, from a mighty female of the olden time, the mother of the god who created the sun and moon and all good things. She had power over the elements, sending thunder and lightning to lay waste the lands of those who displeased her, but showering down fertility and abundance upon the possessions of her faithful worshippers. Others described her as having been an Indian princess,

who once reigned among the mountains of Dobayba, and was renowned throughout the land for her supernatural power and wisdom. After her death, divine honours were paid her, and a great temple was erected for her worship. Hither the natives repaired from far and near, on a kind of pilgrimage, bearing offerings of their most valuable effects. The caciques who ruled over distant territories also sent golden tributes, at certain times of the year, to be deposited in this temple, and slaves to be sacrificed at its shrine. At one time, it was added, this worship fell into disuse, the pilgrimages were discontinued, and the caciques neglected to send their tributes; whereupon the deity, as a punishment, inflicted a drought upon the country. The springs and fountains failed, the rivers were dried up; the inhabitants of the mountains were obliged to descend into the plains, where they digged pits and wells, but these likewise failing, a great part of the nations perished with thirst. The remainder hastened to propitiate the deity by tributes and sacrifices, and thus succeeded in averting her displeasure. In consequence of offerings of the kind, made for generations from all parts of the country, the temple was said to be filled with treasure, and its walls to be covered with golden gifts.* In addition to the tale of this temple, the Indians gave marvellous accounts of the general wealth of this province, declaring that it abounded with mines of gold, the veins of which reached from the dwelling of the cacique to the borders of his dominions.

To penetrate to this territory, and above all to secure the treasures of the golden temple, was an enterprise suited to the adventurous spirit of the Spaniards. Vasco Nuñez chose one hundred and seventy of his hardiest men for the purpose. Embarking them in two brigantines and a number of canoes, he set sail from Darien, and, after standing about nine leagues to the east, came to the mouth of the Rio Grande de San Juan, or the Great River of St. John, also called the Atrato, which is since ascertained to be one of the branches of the river Darien. Here he detached Rodrigo Enriquez de Colmenares with one-third of his forces, to explore the stream, while he himself proceeded with the residue to another branch of the river, which he was told flowed from the province of Dobayba, and which he ascended, flushed with sanguine expectations.†

* Peter Martyr, decad. iii. cap. 6. Idem, decad. vii. cap. 10.

† In recording this expedition, the author has followed the old Spanish narratives, written when the face of the country was but little known; and

His old enemy Zemaco, the cacique of Darien, however, had discovered the object of his expedition, and had taken measures to disappoint it; repairing to the province of Dobayba, he had prevailed upon its cacique to retire at the approach of the Spaniards, leaving his country deserted.

Vasco Nuñez found a village situated in a marshy neighbourhood, on the banks of the river, and mistook it for the residence of the cacique: it was silent and abandoned. There was not an Indian to be met with from whom he could obtain any information about the country, or who could guide him to the golden temple. He was disappointed, also, in his hopes of obtaining a supply of provisions, but he found weapons of various kinds hanging in the deserted houses, and gathered jewels and pieces of gold to the value of seven thousand castillanos. Discouraged by the savage look of the surrounding wilderness, which was perplexed by deep morasses, and having no guides to aid him in exploring it, he put all the booty he had collected into two large canoes, and made his way back to the Gulf of Uraba. Here he was assailed by a violent tempest which nearly wrecked his two brigantines, and obliged him to throw a great part of their cargoes overboard. The two canoes containing the booty were swallowed up by the raging sea, and all their crews perished.

Thus baffled and tempest-tossed, Vasco Nuñez at length succeeded in getting into what is termed the Grand River, which he ascended, and rejoined Colmenares and his detachment. They now extended their excursions up a stream which emptied itself into the Grand River, and which, from the dark hue of its waters, they called Rio Negro, or the Black River. They also explored certain other tributary streams, branching from it, though not without occasional skirmishes with the natives.

Ascending one of these minor rivers with a part of his men, Vasco Nuñez came to the territories of a cacique named Abibeyba, who reigned over a region of marshes

he was much perplexed to reconcile the accounts given of numerous streams with the rivers laid down on modern maps. By a clear and judicious explanation, given in the recent work of Don Manuel Josef Quintana, it appears that the different streams explored by Vasco Nunez and Colmenares were all branches of one grand river, which, descending from the mountains of the interior, winds about in crystal streams among the plains and morasses bordering the bottom of the great Gulf of Darien, and discharges itself by various mouths into the gulf. In fact, the stream which ran by the infant city of Santa Maria de la Antigua was but one of its branches, a fact entirely unknown to Vasco Nunez and his companions.

and shallow lakes. The habitations of the natives were built amidst the branches of immense and lofty trees. They were large enough to contain whole family connections, and were constructed partly of wood, partly of a kind of wicker-work, combining strength and pliability, and yielding uninjured to the motion of the branches when agitated by the wind. The inhabitants ascended to them, with great agility, by light ladders, formed of great reeds split through the middle, for the reeds on this coast grow to the thickness of a man's body. These ladders they drew up after them at night, or in case of attack. These habitations were well stocked with provisions; but the fermented beverages, of which these people had always a supply, were buried in vessels in the earth, at the foot of the tree, lest they should be rendered turbid by the rocking of the houses. Close by, also, were the canoes with which they navigated the rivers and ponds of their marshy country, and followed their main occupation of fishing.

On the approach of the Spaniards, the Indians took refuge in their tree-built castles, and drew up the ladders. The former called upon them to descend and to fear nothing. Upon this the cacique replied, entreating that he might not be molested, seeing he had done them no injury. They threatened, unless he came down, to fell the trees, or to set fire to them and burn him and his wives and children. The cacique was disposed to consent, but was prevented by the entreaties of his people. Upon this the Spaniards prepared to hue down the trees, but were assailed by showers of stones. They covered themselves, however, with their bucklers, assailed the trees vigorously with their hatchets, and soon compelled the inhabitants to capitulate. The cacique descended with his wife and two of his children. The first demand of the Spaniards was for gold. He assured them he had none; for, having no need of it, he had never made it an object of his search. Being importuned, however, he said that if he were permitted to repair to certain mountains at a distance, he would in a few days return, and bring them what they desired. They permitted him to depart, retaining his wife and children as hostages, but they saw no more of the cacique. After remaining here a few days, and regaling on the provisions which they found in abundance, they continued their foraging expeditions, often opposed by the bold and warlike natives, and suffering occasional loss, but inflicting great havoc on their opposers.

Having thus overrun a considerable extent of country, and no grand object presenting to lure him on to further enterprise, Vasco Nuñez at length returned to Darien with the spoils and captives he had taken, leaving Bartolome Hurtado with thirty men in an Indian village on the Rio Negro, or Black River, to hold the country in subjection. Thus terminated the first expedition in quest of the golden temple of Dobayba, which, for some time, continued to be a favourite object of enterprise among the adventurers of Darien.

CHAPTER V.

Disaster on the Black River—Indian Plot against Darien.

Bartolome Hurtado, being left to his own discretion on the banks of the Black River, occupied himself occasionally in hunting the scattered natives who straggled about the surrounding forests. Having in this way picked up twenty-four captives, he put them on board of a large canoe, like so much live stock, to be transported to Darien and sold as slaves. Twenty of his followers, who were infirm either from wounds or the diseases of the climate, embarked also in the canoe, so that only ten men remained with Hurtado.

The great canoe, thus heavily freighted, descended the Black River slowly, between banks overhung with forests. Zemaco, the indefatigable cacique of Darien, was on the watch, and waylaid the ark with four canoes filled with warriors, armed with war-clubs and lances hardened in the fire. The Spaniards, being sick, could make but feeble resistance; some were massacred, others leaped into the river and were drowned. Two only escaped, by clinging to two trunks of trees that were floating down the river, and covering themselves with the branches. Reaching the shore in safety, they returned to Bartolome Hurtado, with the tragical tidings of the death of his followers. Hurtado was so disheartened by the news, and so dismayed at his own helpless situation, in the midst of a hostile country, that he resolved to abandon the fatal shores of the Black River, and return to Darien. He was quickened in this resolution by receiving intimation of a conspiracy forming among the natives. The implacable Zemaco had drawn four other caciques into a secret plan to assemble their vassals and make a sudden attack upon Darien: Hurtado hastened with the remnant of his followers to

carry tidings to the settlement of this conspiracy. Many of the inhabitants were alarmed at his intelligence; others treated it as a false rumour of the Indians, and no preparations were made against what might be a mere imaginary danger.

Fortunately for the Spaniards, among the female captives owned by Vasco Nuñez was an Indian damsel named Fulvia; to whom, in consequence of her beauty, he had shown great favour, and who had become strongly attached to him. She had a brother among the warriors of Zemaco, who often visited her in secret. In one of his visits, he informed her that on a certain night the settlement would be attacked, and every Spaniard destroyed. He charged her, therefore, to hide herself that night in a certain place until he should come to her aid, lest she should be slain in the confusion of the massacre.

When her brother was gone, a violent struggle took place in the bosom of the Indian girl, between her feeling for her family and her people, and her affection for Vasco Nuñez. The latter at length prevailed, and she revealed all that had been told to her. The Spaniard prevailed on her to send for her brother under pretence of aiding her to escape. Having him in his power, he extorted from him all that he knew of the designs of the enemy. His confessions showed what imminent danger had been lurking round Vasco Nuñez in his most unsuspecting moments. The prisoner informed him that he had been one of forty Indians sent some time before by the cacique Zemaco to Vasco Nuñez, in seeming friendship, to be employed by him in cultivating the fields adjacent to the settlement. They had secret orders, however, to take an opportunity, when the Spaniard should come forth to inspect their work, to set upon him in an unguarded moment, and destroy him. Fortunately, Vasco Nuñez always visited the fields mounted on his war-horse, and armed with lance and target, and the Indians were so awed by his martial appearance, and by the terrible animal he bestrode, that they dared not attack him.

Foiled in this and other attempts of the kind, Zemaco resorted to the conspiracy with which the settlement was now menaced. Five caciques had joined in the confederacy: they had prepared a hundred canoes; amassed provisions for an army; and concerted to assemble five thousand picked warriors at a certain time and place; with these they were to make an attack on the settlement by land and

water, in the middle of the night, and to slaughter every Spaniard.

Having learnt where the confederate chiefs were to be found, and where they had deposited their provisions, Vasco Nuñez chose seventy of his best men well armed, and made a circuit by land, while Colmenares, with sixty men, sallied forth secretly in four canoes, guided by the Indian prisoner. In this way they surprised the general of the Indian army and several of the principal confederates, and got possession of all their provisions, though they failed to capture the formidable Zemaco. The Indian general was shot to death with arrows, and the leaders of the conspiracy were hanged in presence of their captive followers. The defeat of this deep-laid plan, and the punishment of its devisers, spread terror throughout the neighbouring provinces, and prevented any further hostilities. Vasco Nuñez, however, caused a strong fortress of wood to be immediately erected, to guard against any future assaults of the savages.

CHAPTER VI.

Further Factions in the Colony—Arrogance of Alonzo Perez and the Bachelor Corral.

A CONSIDERABLE time had now elapsed since the departure of Valdivia for Hispaniola, yet no tidings had been received from him. Many began to fear that some disaster had befallen him; while others insinuated that it was possible both he and Zamudio might have neglected the objects of their mission, and, having appropriated to their own use the gold with which they had been intrusted, abandoned the colony to its fate.

Vasco Nuñez himself was harassed by these surmises; and by the dread lest the Bachelor Enciso should succeed in prejudicing the mind of his sovereign against him. Impatient of this state of anxious suspense, he determined to repair to Spain, to communicate in person all that he had heard concerning the Southern Sea, and to ask for the troops necessary for its discovery.

Every one, however, both friend and foe, exclaimed against such a measure, representing his presence as indispensable to the safety of the colony, from his great talents as a commander, and the fear entertained of him by the Indians.

After much debate and contention, it was at length

agreed that Juan de Cayzedo and Rodrigo Enriquez de Colmenares should go in his place, instructed to make all necessary representations to the king. Letters were written also, containing extravagant accounts of the riches of the country, partly dictated by the sanguine hopes of the writers, and partly by the fables of the natives. The rumoured wealth of the province of Dobayba, and the treasures of its golden temple were not forgotten; and an Indian was taken to Spain by the commissioners, a native of the province of Zenu, where gold was said to be gathered in nets stretched across the mountain streams. To give more weight to all these stories, every one contributed some portion of gold from his private hoard, to be presented to the king in addition to the amount arising from his fifths.

But little time had elapsed after the departure of the commissioners, when new dissensions broke out in the colony. It was hardly to be expected that a fortuitous assemblage of adventurers could remain long tranquil during a time of suffering under rulers of questionable authority. Vasco Nuñez, it is true, had risen by his courage and abilities; but he had risen from among their ranks; he was, in a manner, of their own creation; and they had not become sufficiently accustomed to him as a governor, to forget that he was recently but a mere soldier of fortune, and an absconding debtor.

Their factious discontent, however, was directed at first against a favourite of Vasco Nuñez, rather than against himself. He had invested Bartolome Hurtado, the commander of the Black River, with considerable authority in the colony, and the latter gave great offence by his oppressive conduct. Hurtado had particularly aggrieved by his arrogance one Alonzo Perez de la Rua, a touchy cavalier, jealous of his honour, and peculiarly gifted with the sensitive punctilio of a Spaniard. Firing at some indignity, whether real or fancied, Alonzo Perez threw himself into the ranks of the disaffected, and was immediately chosen as their leader. Thus backed by a faction, he clamoured loudly for the punishment of Hurtado; and, finding his demands unattended to, threw out threats of deposing Vasco Nuñez. The latter, with his usual spirit and promptness, seized upon the testy Alonzo Perez, and threw him into prison, to digest his indignities and cool his passion at leisure.

The conspirators flew to arms to liberate their leader. The friends of Vasco Nuñez were equally on the alert.

The two parties drew out in battle array in the public square, and a sanguinary conflict was on the point of taking place. Fortunately there were some cool heads left in the colony. These interfered at the critical moment, representing to the angry adversaries that, if they fought among themselves, and diminished their already scanty numbers, even the conquerors must eventually fall a prey to the Indians.

Their remonstrances had effect. A parley ensued, and, after much noisy debate, a kind of compromise was made. Alonzo Perez was liberated, and the mutineers dispersed quietly to their homes. The next day, however, they were again in arms, and seized upon Bartolome Hurtado; but after a little while were prevailed upon to set him free. Their factious views seemed turned to a higher object. They broke forth into loud murmurs against Vasco Nuñez, complaining that he had not made a fair division of the gold and slaves taken in the late expeditions, and threatening to arrest him and bring him to account. Above all, they clamoured for an immediate distribution of ten thousand castellanos in gold, yet unshared.

Vasco Nuñez understood too well the riotous nature of the people under him, and his own precarious hold on their obedience, to attempt to cope with them in this moment of turbulence. He shrewdly determined, therefore, to withdraw from the sight of the multitude, and to leave them to divide the spoil among themselves, trusting to their own strife for his security. That very night he sallied forth into the country, under pretence of going on a hunting expedition.

The next morning the mutineers found themselves in possession of the field. Alonzo Perez, the pragmatical ringleader, immediately assumed the command, seconded by the Bachelor Corral. Their first measure was to seize upon the ten thousand castellanos, and to divide them among the multitude, by way of securing their own popularity. The event proved the sagacity and forethought of Vasco Nuñez. Scarcely had these hotheaded intermeddlers entered upon the partition of the gold, than a furious strife arose. Every one was dissatisfied with his share, considering his merits entitled to peculiar recompense. Every attempt to appease the rabble only augmented their violence, and in their rage they swore that Vasco Nuñez had always shown more judgment and discrimination in his distributions to men of merit.

The adherents of the latter now ventured to lift up their

voices; "Vasco Nuñez," said they, "won the gold by his enterprise and valour, and would have shared it with the brave and the deserving; but these men have seized upon it by factious means, and would squander it upon their minions." The multitude, who, in fact, admired the soldier-like qualities of Vasco Nuñez, displayed one of the customary reverses of popular feeling. The touchy Alonzo Perez, his coadjutor the Bachelor Corral, and several other of the ringleaders, were seized, put into irons, and confined in the fortress; and Vasco Nuñez was recalled with loud acclamations to the settlement.

How long this pseudo-commander might have been able to manage the unsteady populace it is impossible to say; but just at this juncture two ships arrived from Hispaniola, freighted with supplies, and bringing a reinforcement of one hundred and fifty men. They brought also a commission to Vasco Nuñez, signed by Miguel de Pasamonte, the royal treasurer of Hispaniola (to whom he had sent a private present of gold), constituting him captain-general of the colony. It is doubtful whether Pasamonte possessed the power to confer such a commission, though it is affirmed that the king had clothed him with it, as a kind of check upon the authority of the admiral Don Diego Columbus, then governor of Hispaniola, of whose extensive sway in the New World the monarch was secretly jealous. At any rate, the treasurer appears to have acted in full confidence of the ultimate approbation of his sovereign.

Vasco Nuñez was rejoiced at receiving a commission which clothed him with at least the semblance of royal sanction. Feeling more assured in his situation, and being naturally of a generous and forgiving temper, he was easily prevailed upon, in his moment of exultation, to release and pardon Alonzo Perez, the Bachelor Corral, and the other ringleaders of the late commotions; and for a time the feuds and factions of this petty community were lulled to repose.

CHAPTER VII.

Vasco Nunez determines to seek the Sea beyond the Mountains.

[1513.]

THE temporary triumph of Vasco Nuñez was soon overcast by tidings from Spain. His late colleague, the alcalde Zamudio, wrote him word, that the Bachelor

Enciso had carried his complaints to the foot of the throne, and succeeded in rousing the indignation of the king, and had obtained a sentence in his favour, condemning Vasco Nuñez in costs and damages. Zamudio informed him, in addition, that he would be immediately summoned to repair to Spain, and answer in person the criminal charges advanced against him on account of the harsh treatment and probable death of the unfortunate Nicuesa.

Vasco Nuñez was at first stunned by this intelligence, which seemed at one blow to annihilate all his hopes and fortunes. He was a man, however, of prompt decision and intrepid spirit. The information received from Spain was private and informal; no order had yet arrived from the king; he was still master of his actions, and had control over the colony. One brilliant achievement might atone for all the past, and fix him in the favour of the monarch. Such an achievement was within his reach—the discovery of the Southern Sea. It is true, a thousand soldiers had been required for the expedition, but were he to wait for their arrival from Spain, his day of grace would be past. It was a desperate thing to undertake the task with the handful of men at his command, but the circumstances of the case were desperate. Fame, fortune, life itself, depended upon the successful and the prompt execution of the enterprise. To linger was to be lost.

Vasco Nuñez looked round upon the crew of daring and reckless adventurers that formed the colony, and chose one hundred and ninety of the most resolute, vigorous, and devoted to his person. These he armed with swords, targets, crossbows, and arquebuses. He did not conceal from them the danger of the enterprise into which he was about to lead them; but the spirit of these Spanish adventurers was always roused by the idea of perilous and extravagant exploit. To aid his slender forces, he took with him a number of bloodhounds, which had been found to be terrific allies in Indian warfare.

The Spanish writers make particular mention of one of these animals, named Leoncico, which was a constant companion, and as it were body-guard of Vasco Nuñez, and describe him as minutely as they would a favourite warrior. He was of a middle size, but immensely strong; of a dull yellow or reddish colour, with a black muzzle, and his body was scarred all over with wounds received in innumerable battles with the Indians. Vasco Nuñez always took him on his expeditions, and sometimes lent

him to others, receiving for his services the same share of booty allotted to an armed man. In this way he gained by him in the course of his campaigns upwards of a thousand crowns. The Indians, it is said, had conceived such terror of this animal, that the very sight of him was sufficient to put a host of them to flight.*

In addition to these forces, Vasco Nuñez took with him a number of the Indians of Darien, whom he had won to him by kindness, and whose services were important, from their knowledge of the wilderness, and of the habits and resources of savage life. Such was the motley armament that set forth from the little colony of Darien, under the guidance of a daring, if not desperate commander, in quest of the great Pacific Ocean.

CHAPTER VIII.

Expedition in quest of the Southern Sea.

It was on the first of September that Vasco Nuñez embarked with his followers in a brigantine and nine large canoes or pirogues, followed by the cheers and good wishes of those who remained at the settlement. Standing to the north-westward, he arrived without accident at Coyba, the dominion of the cacique Careta, whose daughter he had received as a pledge of amity. That Indian beauty had acquired a great influence over Vasco Nuñez, and appears to have cemented his friendship with her father and her people. He was received by the cacique with open arms, and furnished with guides and warriors to aid him in his enterprise.

Vasco Nuñez left about half of his men at Coyba to guard the brigantine and canoes, while he should penetrate the wilderness with the residue. The importance of his present expedition, not merely as affecting his own fortunes, but as it were unfolding a mighty secret of nature, seems to have impressed itself upon his spirit, and to have given correspondent solemnity to his conduct. Before setting out upon his march, he caused mass to be performed, and offered up prayers to God for the success of his perilous undertaking.

It was on the sixth of September, that he struck off for the mountains. The march was difficult and toilsome. The Spaniards, encumbered with the weight of their armour and weapons, and oppressed by the heat of a

* Oviedo, Hist. Ind., p. 2, cap. 3, MS.

tropical climate, were obliged to climb rocky precipices, and to struggle through close and tangled forests. Their Indian allies aided them by carrying their ammunition and provisions, and by guiding them to the most practicable paths.

On the eighth of September they arrived at the village of Ponca, the ancient enemy of Careta. The village was lifeless and abandoned; the cacique and his people had fled to the fastnesses of the mountains. The Spaniards remained here several days to recruit the health of some of their number who had fallen ill. It was necessary also to procure guides acquainted with the mountain wilderness they were approaching. The retreat of Ponca was at length discovered, and he was prevailed upon, though reluctantly, to come to Vasco Nuñez. The latter had a peculiar facility in winning the confidence and friendship of the natives. The cacique was soon so captivated by his kindness, that he revealed to him in secret all he knew of the natural riches of the country. He assured him of the truth of what had been told him about a great pechry or sea beyond the mountains, and gave him several ornaments ingeniously wrought of fine gold, which had been brought from the countries upon its borders. He told him, moreover, that when he had attained the summit of a lofty ridge, to which he pointed, and which seemed to rise up to the skies, he would behold that sea spread out far below him.

Animated by these accounts, Vasco Nuñez procured fresh guides from the cacique, and prepared to ascend the mountains. Numbers of his men having fallen ill from fatigue and the heat of the climate, he ordered them to return slowly to Coyba, taking with him none but such as were in robust and vigorous health.

On the 20th of September, he again set forward through a broken rocky country, covered with a matted forest, and intersected by deep and turbulent streams, many of which it was necessary to cross upon rafts.

So toilsome was the journey, that in four days they did not advance above ten leagues, and in the meantime they suffered excessively from hunger. At the end of this time they arrived at the province of a warlike cacique, named Quaraquà, who was at war with Ponca.

Hearing that a band of strangers were entering his territories, guided by the subjects of his inveterate foe, the cacique took the field with a large number of warriors, some armed with bows and arrows, others with long

spears, or with doubled-handed maces of palm-wood, almost as heavy and hard as iron. Seeing the inconsiderable number of the Spaniards, they set upon them with furious yells, thinking to overcome them in an instant. The first discharge of firearms, however, struck them with dismay. They thought they were contending with demons who vomited forth thunder and lightning, especially when they saw their companions fall bleeding and dead beside them, without receiving any apparent blow. They took to headlong flight, and were hotly pursued by the Spaniards and their bloodhounds. Some were transfixed with lances, others hewn down with swords, and many were torn to pieces by the dogs, so that Quaraquà and six hundred of his warriors were left dead upon the field.

A brother of the cacique and several chiefs were taken prisoners. They were clad in robes of white cotton. Either from their effeminate dress, or from the accusations of their enemies, the Spaniards were induced to consider them guilty of unnatural crimes, and, in their abhorrence and disgust, gave them to be torn to pieces by the bloodhounds.*

It is also affirmed, that among the prisoners were several negroes, who had been slaves to the cacique. The Spaniards, we are told, were informed by the other captives, that these black men came from a region at no great distance, where there was a people of that colour, with whom they were frequently at war. "These," adds the Spanish writer, "were the first negroes ever found in the New World, and I believe no others have since been discovered."†

After this sanguinary triumph, the Spaniards marched to the village of Quaraquà, where they found considerable booty in gold and jewels. Of this Vasco Nuñez reserved one-fifth for the crown, and shared the rest liberally among his followers. The village was at the foot of the last mountain that remained for them to climb; several of the Spaniards, however, were so disabled by wounds re-

* Herrera, Hist. Ind., decad. i. lib. x. cap. 1.

† Peter Martyr, in his third Decade, makes mention of these negroes in the following words:—"About two days' journey distant from Quaraquà is a region inhabited only by black Moors, exceeding fierce and cruel. It is supposed that in time past certain black Moors sailed thither out of Ethiopia, to rob, and that by shipwreck, or some other chance, they were driven to these mountains." As Martyr lived and wrote at the time, he of course related the mere rumour of the day, which all subsequent accounts have disproved. The other historians who mentioned the circumstance have probably repeated it from him. It must have risen from some misrepresentation, and is not entitled to credit.

ceived in battle, or so exhausted by the fatigue and hunger they had endured, that they were unable to proceed. They were obliged therefore reluctantly to remain in the village, within sight of the mountain-top that commanded the long-sought prospect. Vasco Nuñez selected fresh guides from among his prisoners, who were natives of the province, and sent back the subjects of Ponca. Of the band of Spaniards who had set out with him in this enterprise, sixty-seven alone remained in sufficient health and spirits for this last effort. These he ordered to retire early to repose, that they might be ready to set off at the cool and fresh hour of daybreak, so as to reach the summit of the mountain before the noontide heat.

CHAPTER IX.

Discovery of the Pacific Ocean.

The day had scarce dawned, when Vasco Nuñez and his followers set forth from the Indian village and began to climb the height. It was a severe and rugged toil for men so wayworn; but they were filled with new ardour at the idea of the triumphant scene that was so soon to repay them for all their hardships.

About ten o'clock in the morning they emerged from the thick forests through which they had hitherto struggled, and arrived at a lofty and airy region of the mountain. The bald summit alone remained to be ascended; and their guides pointed to a moderate eminence, from which they said the southern sea was visible.

Upon this Vasco Nuñez commanded his followers to halt, and that no man should stir from his place. Then, with a palpitating heart, he ascended alone the bare mountain-top. On reaching the summit, the long-desired prospect burst upon his view. It was as if a new world were unfolded to him, separated from all hitherto known by this mighty barrier of mountains. Below him extended a vast chaos of rock and forest, and green savannas and wandering streams, while at a distance the waters of the promised ocean glittered in the morning sun.

At this glorious prospect Vasco Nuñez sank upon his knees, and poured out thanks to God for being the first European to whom it was given to make that great discovery. He then called his people to ascend: "Behold, my friends," said he, "that glorious sight which we have so much desired. Let us give thanks to God that he has

granted us this great honour and advantage. Let us pray to Him to guide and aid us to conquer the sea and land which we have discovered, and which Christian has never entered to preach the holy doctrine of the Evangelists. As to yourselves, be as you have hitherto been, faithful and true to me, and by the favour of Christ you will become the richest Spaniards that have ever come to the Indies; you will render the greatest services to your king that ever vassal rendered to his lord; and you will have the eternal glory and advantage of all that is here discovered, conquered, and converted to our holy Catholic faith."

The Spaniards answered this speech by embracing Vasco Nuñez and promising to follow him to death. Among them was a priest, named Andres de Vara, who lifted up his voice and chanted *Te Deum laudamus*—the usual anthem of Spanish discoverers. The rest, kneeling down, joined in the strain with pious enthusiasm and tears of joy; and never did a more sincere oblation rise to the Deity from a sanctified altar, than from that mountain summit. It was indeed one of the most sublime discoveries that had yet been made in the New World, and must have opened a boundless field of conjecture to the wondering Spaniards. The imagination delights to picture forth the splendid confusion of their thoughts. Was this the great Indian Ocean, studded with precious islands, abounding in gold, in gems, and spices, and bordered by the gorgeous cities and wealthy marts of the East? or was it some lonely sea, locked up in the embraces of savage uncultivated continents, and never traversed by a bark, excepting the light pirogue of the savage? The latter could hardly be the case, for the natives had told the Spaniards of golden realms, and populous and powerful and luxurious nations upon its shores. Perhaps it might be bordered by various people, civilized in fact, though differing from Europe in their civilization; who might have peculiar laws and customs and arts and sciences; who might form, as it were, a world of their own, intercommuning by this mighty sea, and carrying on commerce between their own islands and continents; but who might exist in total ignorance and independence of the other hemisphere.

Such may naturally have been the ideas suggested by the sight of this unknown ocean. It was the prevalent belief of the Spaniards, however, that they were the first Christians who had made the discovery. Vasco Nuñez,

therefore, called upon all present to witness that he took possession of that sea, its islands, and surrounding lands, in the name of the sovereigns of Castile, and the notary of the expedition made a testimonial of the same, to which all present, to the number of sixty-seven men, signed their names. He then caused a fair and tall tree to be cut down and wrought into a cross, which was elevated on the spot whence he had first beheld the sea. A mound of stones was likewise piled up to serve as a monument, and the names of the Castilian sovereigns were carved on the neighbouring trees. The Indians beheld all these ceremonials and rejoicings in silent wonder, and, while they aided to erect the cross and pile up the mound of stones, marvelled exceedingly at the meaning of these monuments, little thinking that they marked the subjugation of their land.

The memorable event here recorded took place on the 26th of September, 1513; so that the Spaniards had spent twenty days in performing the journey from the province of Careta to the summit of the mountain, a distance which at present, it is said, does not require more than six days' travel. Indeed the isthmus in this neighbourhood is not more than eighteen leagues in breadth in its widest part, and in some places merely seven; but it consists of a ridge of extremely high and rugged mountains. When the discoverers traversed it, they had no route but the Indian paths, and often had to force their way amidst all kinds of obstacles, both from the savage country and its savage inhabitants. In fact, the details of this narrative sufficiently account for the slowness of their progress, and present an array of difficulties and perils, which, as has been well observed, none but those "men of iron" could have subdued and overcome.*

CHAPTER X.

Vasco Nunez marches to the Shores of the South Sea.

[1513.]

HAVING taken possession of the Pacific Ocean and all its realms from the summit of the mountain, Vasco Nuñez now descended with his little band to seek the regions of reputed wealth upon its shores. He had not proceeded far when he came to the province of a warlike cacique,

* Vidas de Espanoles Célebres, por Don Manuel Josef Quintana, tom. ii. p. 40.

named Chiapes, who, issuing forth at the head of his warriors, looked with scorn at the scanty number of straggling Spaniards, and forbade them to set foot within his territories. Vasco Nuñez depended for safety upon his power of striking terror into the ignorant savages. Ordering his arquebusiers to the front, he poured a volley into the enemy, and then let loose the bloodhounds. The flash and noise of the firearms, and the sulphurous smoke which was carried by the wind among the Indians, overwhelmed them with dismay. Some fell down in a panic as though they had been struck by thunderbolts, the rest betook themselves to headlong flight.

Vasco Nuñez commanded his men to refrain from needless slaughter. He made many prisoners, and on arriving at the village, sent some of them in search of their cacique, accompanied by several of his Indian guides. The latter informed Chiapes of the supernatural power of the Spaniards, assuring him that they exterminated with thunder and lightning all who dared to oppose them, but loaded all such as submitted to them with benefits. They advised him, therefore, to throw himself upon their mercy and seek their friendship.

The cacique listened to their advice, and came trembling to the Spaniards, bringing with him five hundred pounds' weight of wrought gold as a peace-offering, for he had already learnt the value they set upon that metal. Vasco Nuñez received him with great kindness, and graciously accepted his gold, for which he gave him beads, hawks'-bells, and looking-glasses, making him in his own conceit the richest potentate on that side of the mountains.

Friendship being thus established between them, Vasco Nuñez remained at the village for a few days, sending back the guides who had accompanied him from Quaraquà, and ordering his people whom he had left at that place to rejoin him. In the meantime he sent out three scouting parties of twelve men each, under Francisco Pizarro, Juan de Escaray, and Alonzo Martin de Bon Benito, to explore the surrounding country and discover the best route to the sea. Alonzo Martin was the most successful. After two days' journey he came to a beach, where he found two large canoes lying high and dry, without any water being in sight. While the Spaniards were regarding these canoes, and wondering why they should be so far on land, the tide, which rises to a great height on that coast, came rapidly in and set them afloat; upon

this, Alonzo Martin stepped into one of them, and called his companions to bear witness that he was the first European that embarked upon that sea; his example was followed by one Blas de Etienza, who called them likewise to testify that he was the second.*

We mention minute particulars of the kind as being characteristic of these extraordinary enterprises, and of the extraordinary people who undertook them. The humblest of these Spanish adventurers seemed actuated by a swelling and ambitious spirit, which rose superior at times to mere sordid considerations, and aspired to share the glory of these great discoveries. The scouting party having thus explored a direct route to the sea-coast, returned to report their success to their commander.

Vasco Nuñez being rejoined by his men from Quaraquà, now left the greater part of his followers to repose and recover from their sickness and fatigues in the village of Chiapes; and, taking with him twenty-six Spaniards, well armed, he set out on the 29th of September, for the sea-coast, accompanied by the cacique and a number of his warriors. The thick forests, which covered the mountains, descended to the very margin of the sea, surrounding and overshadowing the wide and beautiful bays that penetrated far into the land. The whole coast, as far as the eye could reach, was perfectly wild, the sea without a sail, and both seemed never to have been under the dominion of civilized man.

Vasco Nuñez arrived on the borders of one of those vast bays, to which he gave the name of Saint Michael, it being discovered on that saint's day. The tide was out, the water was above half a league distant, and the intervening beach was covered with mud; he seated himself, therefore, under the shade of the forest trees until the tide should rise. After a while, the water came rushing in with great impetuosity, and soon reached nearly to the place where the Spaniards were reposing. Upon this Vasco Nuñez rose and took a banner on which were painted the Virgin and Child, and under them the arms of Castile and Leon; then drawing his sword and throwing his buckler on his shoulder, he marched into the sea until the water reached above his knees, and waving his banner, exclaimed with a loud voice, "Long live the high and mighty monarchs Don Ferdinand and Donna Juana, sovereigns of Castile, of Leon, and of Arragon, in whose name, and for the royal crown of Castile, I take real, and

* Herrera, Hist. Ind., decad. i. lib. x. cap. 2.

corporal, and actual possession of these seas, and lands, and coasts, and ports, and islands of the south, and all thereunto annexed; and of the kingdoms and provinces which do or may appertain to them, in whatever manner, or by whatever right or title, ancient or modern, in times past, present, or to come, without any contradiction; and if other prince or captain, Christian or infidel, or of any law, sect, or condition whatsoever, shall pretend any right to these lands and seas, I am ready and prepared to maintain and defend them in the name of the Castilian sovereigns, present and future, whose is the empire and dominion over these Indian islands, and Terra Firma, northern and southern, with all their seas, both at the arctic and antarctic poles, on either side of the equinoctial line, whether within or without the tropics of Cancer and Capricorn, both now and in all times, as long as the world endures, and until the final day of judgment of all mankind."

This swelling declaration and defiance being uttered with a loud voice, and no one appearing to dispute his pretensions, Vasco Nuñez called upon his companions to bear witness of the fact of his having duly taken possession. They all declared themselves ready to defend his claim to the uttermost, as became true and loyal vassals to the Castilian sovereigns; and the notary having drawn up a document for the occasion, they subscribed it with their names.

This done, they advanced to the margin of the sea, and stooping down tasted its waters. When they found that, though severed by intervening mountains and continents, they were salt like the seas of the north, they felt assured that they had indeed discovered an ocean, and again returned thanks to God.

Having concluded all these ceremonies, Vasco Nuñez drew a dagger from his girdle and cut a cross on a tree which grew within the water, and made two other crosses on two adjacent trees, in honour of the Three Persons of the Trinity, and in token of possession. His followers likewise cut crosses on many of the trees of the adjacent forest, and lopped off branches with their swords to bear away as trophies.*

Such was the singular medley of chivalrous and religious ceremonial, with which these Spanish adventurers took possession of the vast Pacific Ocean, and all its

* Many of the foregoing particulars are from the unpublished volume of Oviedo's History of the Indies.

lands—a scene strongly characteristic of the nation and the age.

CHAPTER XI.

Adventures of Vasco Nunez on the Borders of the Pacific Ocean.

[1513.]

While he made the village of Chiapes his head-quarters, Vasco Nuñez foraged the adjacent country, and obtained considerable quantities of gold from the natives. Encouraged by his success, he undertook to explore by sea the borders of a neighbouring gulf of great extent, which penetrated far into the land. The cacique Chiapes warned him of the danger of venturing to sea in the stormy season, which comprises the months of October, November, and December, assuring him that he had beheld many canoes swallowed up in the mighty waves and whirlpools, which at such time render the gulf almost unnavigable.

These remonstrances were unavailing: Vasco Nuñez expressed a confident belief that God would protect him, seeing that his voyage was to redound to the propagation of the faith, and the augmentation of the power of the Castilian monarchs over the infidels; and in truth this bigoted reliance on the immediate protection of Heaven seems to have been, in a great measure, the cause of the extravagant daring of the Spaniards in their expeditions in those days, whether against Moors or Indians.

Finding his representations of no effect, Chiapes volunteered to take part in this perilous cruise, lest he should appear wanting in courage, or in good will to his guest. Accompanied by the cacique, therefore, Vasco Nuñez embarked on the 17th of October with sixty men in nine canoes, managed by Indians, leaving the residue of his followers to recruit their health and strength in the village of Chiapes.

Scarcely, however, had they put forth on the broad bosom of the gulf, when the wisdom of the cacique's advice was made apparent. The wind began to blow freshly, raising a heavy and tumultuous sea, which broke in roaring and foaming surges on the rocks and reefs, and among the numerous islets with which the gulf was studded. The light canoes were deeply laden with men unskilled in their management. It was frightful to those in one canoe to behold their companions, one instant tossed high on the breaking crest of a wave, the next plunging

out of sight, in a watery abyss. The Indians themselves, though almost amphibious in their habits, showed signs of consternation; for amidst these rocks and breakers even the skill of the expert swimmer would be of little avail. At length the Indians succeeded in tying the canoes in pairs, side by side, to prevent their being overturned, and in this way they kept afloat, until towards evening they were enabled to reach a small island. Here they landed, and fastening the canoes to the rocks, or to small trees that grew upon the shore, they sought an elevated dry place, and stretched themselves to take repose. They had but escaped from one danger to encounter another. Having been for a long time accustomed to the sea on the northern side of the Isthmus, where there is little, if any, rise or fall of the tide, they had neglected to take any precaution against such an occurrence. In a little while they were awakened by the rapid rising of the water. They shifted their situation to a higher ground, but the waters continued to gain upon them, the breakers rushing and roaring and foaming upon the beach like so many monsters of the deep seeking for their prey. Nothing, it is said, can be more dismal and appalling than the sullen bellowing of the sea among the islands of that gulf at the rising and falling of the tide. By degrees, rock after rock, and one sand-bank after another disappeared, until the sea covered the whole island and rose almost to the girdles of the Spaniards. Their situation was now agonizing. A little more, and the waters would overwhelm them; or, even as it was, the least surge might break over them and sweep them from their unsteady footing. Fortunately the wind had lulled, and the sea, having risen above the rocks which had fretted it, became calm. The tide had reached its height and began to subside, and after a time they heard the retiring waves beating against the rocks below them.

When the day dawned, they sought their canoes; but here a sad spectacle met their eyes. Some were broken to pieces, others yawning open in many parts. The clothing and food left in them had been washed away, and replaced by sand and water. The Spaniards gazed on the scene in mute despair; they were faint and weary, and needed food and repose, but famine and labour awaited them, even if they should escape with their lives. Vasco Nuñez, however, rallied their spirits, and set them an example by his own cheerful exertions. Obeying his directions, they set to work to repair, in the best manner they were able,

the damages of the canoes. Such as were not too much shattered they bound and braced up with their girdles, with slips of the bark of trees, or with the tough long stalks of certain sea-weeds. They then peeled off the bark from the small sea-plants, pounded it between stones, and mixed it with grass, and with this endeavoured to caulk the seams and stop the leaks. When re-embarked, their numbers weighed down the canoes almost to the water's edge, and as they rose and sank with the swelling waves, there was danger of their being swallowed up. All day they laboured with the sea, suffering excessively from hunger and thirst, and at nightfall they landed in a corner of the gulf, near the abode of a cacique named Túmaco. Leaving a part of his men to guard the canoes, Vasco Nuñez set out with the residue for the Indian town. He arrived there about midnight, but the inhabitants were on the alert to defend their habitations. The firearms and dogs soon put them to flight, and the Spaniards pursuing them with their swords, drove them howling into the woods. In the village were found provisions in abundance, beside a considerable amount of gold and a great quantity of pearls, many of them of a large size. In the house of the cacique were several huge shells of mother of pearl, and four pearl oysters quite fresh, which showed that there was a pearl fishery in the neighbourhood. Eager to learn the sources of this wealth, Vasco Nuñez sent several of the Indians of Chiapes in search of the cacique, who traced him to a wild retreat among the rocks. By their persuasions Túmaco sent his son, a fine young savage, as a mediator. The latter returned to his father loaded with presents, and extolling the benignity of these superhuman beings, who had shown themselves so terrible in battle. By these means, and by a mutual exchange of presents, a friendly intercourse was soon established. Among other things the cacique gave Vasco Nuñez jewels of gold weighing six hundred and fourteen crowns, and two hundred pearls of great size and beauty, excepting that they were somewhat discoloured in consequence of the oysters having been opened by fire.

The cacique seeing the value which the Spaniards set upon the pearls, sent a number of his men to fish for them at a place about ten miles distant. Certain of the Indians were trained from their youth to this purpose, so as to become expert divers, and to acquire the power of remaining a long time beneath the water. The largest pearls are generally found in the deepest water, sometimes in three

and four fathoms, and are only sought in calm weather; the smaller sort are found at the depth of two and three feet, and the oysters containing them are often driven in quantities on the beach during violent storms.

The party of pearl-divers sent by the cacique consisted of thirty Indians, with whom Vasco Nuñez sent six Spaniards as eye-witnesses. The sea, however, was so furious at that stormy season that the divers dared not venture into the deep water. Such a number of the shell-fish, however, had been driven on shore, that they collected enough to yield pearls to the value of twelve marks of gold. They were small, but exceedingly beautiful, being newly taken and uninjured by fire. A number of these shell-fish and their pearls were selected to be sent to Spain as specimens.

In reply to the inquiries of Vasco Nuñez, the cacique informed him that the coast which he saw stretching to the west continued onwards without end, and that far to the south there was a country abounding in gold, where the inhabitants made use of certain quadrupeds to carry burdens. He moulded a figure of clay to represent these animals, which some of the Spaniards supposed to be a deer, others a camel, others a tapir; for as yet they knew nothing of the lama, the native beast of burden of South America. This was the second intimation received by Vasco Nuñez of the great empire of Peru; and, while it confirmed all that had been told him by the son of Comagre, it awakened glowing anticipations of the glorious triumphs that awaited him.

CHAPTER XII.

Farther Adventures and Exploits of Vasco Nunez on the Borders of the Pacific Ocean.

[1513.]

Lest any ceremonial should be wanting to secure this grand discovery to the crown of Spain, Vasco Nuñez determined to sally from the gulf and take possession of the main-land beyond. The cacique Túmaco furnished him with a canoe of state, formed from the trunk of an enormous tree, and managed by a great number of Indians. The handles of the paddles were inlaid with small pearls, a circumstance which Vasco Nuñez caused his companions to testify before the notary, that it might be reported to

the sovereigns as a proof of the wealth of this newly-discovered sea.*

Departing in the canoe on the 29th of October, he was piloted cautiously by the Indians along the borders of the gulf, over drowned lands where the sea was fringed by inundated forests, and as still as a pool. Arrived at the point of the gulf, Vasco Nuñez landed on a smooth sandy beach, laved by the waters of the broad ocean, and, with buckler on arm, sword in hand, and banner displayed, again marched into the sea and took possession of it, with like ceremonials to those observed in the Gulf of St. Michael's.

The Indians now pointed to a line of land rising above the horizon about four or five leagues distant, which they described as being a great island, the principal one of an archipelago. The whole group abounded with pearls, but those taken on the coasts of this island were represented as being of immense size, many of them as large as a man's eye, and found in shell-fish as big as bucklers. This island and the surrounding cluster of small ones, they added, were under the dominion of a tyrannical and puissant cacique, who often, during the calm seasons, made descents upon the main-land with fleets of canoes, plundering and desolating the coasts, and carrying the people into captivity.

Vasco Nuñez gazed with an eager and wistful eye at this land of riches, and would have immediately undertaken an expedition to it, had not the Indians represented the danger of venturing on such a voyage in that tempestuous season, in their frail canoes. His own recent experience convinced him of the wisdom of their remonstrances. He postponed his visit, therefore, to a future occasion, when, he assured his allies, he would avenge them upon this tyrant invader, and deliver their coasts from his maraudings. In the meantime he gave to this island the name of Isla Rica, and the little archipelago surrounding it the general appellation of the Pearl Islands.

On the 3rd of November he departed from the province of Túmaco, to visit other parts of the coast. He embarked with his men in the canoes, accompanied by Chiapes and his Indians, and guided by the son of Túmaco, who had become strongly attached to the Spaniards. The young man piloted them along an arm of the sea, wide in some places, but in others obstructed by groves of mangrove-trees, which grew within the water, and interlaced their

* Oviedo, Hist. Gen., p. 2, MS.

branches from shore to shore, so that at times the Spaniards were obliged to cut a passage with their swords.

At length they entered a great and turbulent river, which they ascended with difficulty, and, early the next morning surprised a village on its banks, making the cacique Teaochan prisoner; who purchased their favour and kind treatment by a quantity of gold and pearls, and an abundant supply of provisions. As it was the intention of Vasco Nuñez to abandon the shores of the Southern Ocean at this place, and to strike across the mountains for Darien, he took leave of Chiapes and of the youthful son of Túmaco, who were to return to their houses in the canoes. He sent at the same time, a message to his men, whom he had left in the village of Chiapes, appointing a place in the mountains where they were to rejoin him on his way back to Darien.

The talent of Vasco Nuñez for conciliating and winning the good will of the savages is often mentioned, and to such a degree had he exerted it in the present instance, that the two chieftains shed tears at parting. Their conduct had a favourable effect upon the cacique Teaochan; he entertained Vasco Nuñez with the most devoted hospitality during three days that he remained in his village; when about to depart, he furnished him with a stock of provisions sufficient for several days, as his route would be over rocky and sterile mountains. He sent also a numerous band of his subjects to carry the burdens of the Spaniards. These he placed under the command of his son, whom he ordered never to separate from the strangers, nor to permit any of his men to return without the consent of Vasco Nuñez.

CHAPTER XIII.

Vasco Nunez sets out on his Return across the Mountains—His Contests with the Savages.

Turning their backs upon the Southern Sea, the Spaniards now began painfully to clamber the rugged mountains on their return to Darien.

In the early part of their route an unlooked-for suffering awaited them: there was neither brook nor fountain nor standing pool. The burning heat, which produced intolerable thirst, had dried up all the mountain torrents, and they were tantalized by the sight of naked and dusty channels where water had once flowed in abundance.

Their sufferings at length increased to such a height that many threw themselves fevered and panting upon the earth, and were ready to give up the ghost. The Indians, however, encouraged them to proceed, by hopes of speedy relief, and after a while, turning aside from the direct course, led them into a deep and narrow glen, refreshed and cooled by a fountain which bubbled out of a cleft of the rocks.

While refreshing themselves at the fountain, and reposing in the little valley, they learnt from their guides that they were in the territories of a powerful chief named Poncra, famous for his riches. The Spaniards had already heard of the golden stores of this Crœsus of the mountains, and being now refreshed and invigorated, pressed forward with eagerness for his village. The cacique and most of his people fled at their approach, but they found an earnest of his wealth in the deserted houses, amounting to the value of three thousand crowns in gold. Their avarice thus whetted, they despatched Indians in search of Poncra, who found him trembling in his secret retreat, and partly by threats, partly by promises, prevailed upon him and three of his principal subjects to come to Vasco Nuñez. He was a savage, it is said, so hateful of aspect, so misshapen in body and deformed in all his members, that he was hideous to behold. The Spaniards endeavoured by gentle means to draw from him information of the places whence he procured his gold. He professed utter ignorance in the matter, declaring that the gold found in his village had been gathered by his predecessors in times long past, and that as he himself set no value on the metal, he had never troubled himself to seek it. The Spaniards resorted to menaces, and even, it is said, to tortures, to compel him to betray his reputed treasures, but with no better success. Disappointed in their expectations, and enraged at his supposed obstinacy, they listened too readily to charges advanced against him by certain caciques of the neighbourhood, who represented him as a monster of cruelty, and as guilty of crimes repugnant to nature;* whereupon, in the heat of the moment, they gave him and his three companions, who were said to be equally guilty, to be torn in pieces by the dogs.—A rash and cruel sentence, issued on the evidence of avowed enemies; and which, however it may be palliated by the alleged horror and disgust of the Spaniards at the imputed crimes

* Peter Martyr, decad. iii. cap. 2.

of the cacique, bears visibly the stamp of haste and passion, and remains accordingly a foul blot on the character of Vasco Nuñez.

The Spaniards staid for thirty days reposing in the village of the unfortunate Poncra, during which time they were rejoined by their companions, who had been left behind at the village of Chiapes. They were accompanied by a cacique of the mountains, who had lodged and fed them, and made them presents of the value of two thousand crowns in gold. This hospitable savage approached Vasco Nuñez with a serene countenance, and taking him by the hand, "Behold," said he, "most valiant and powerful chief, I bring thee thy companions safe and well, as they entered under my roof. May he who made the thunder and lightning, and who gives us the fruits of the earth, preserve thee and thine in safety!" So saying, he raised his eyes to the sun, as if he worshipped that as his deity and the dispenser of all temporal blessings.*

Departing from this village, and being still accompanied by the Indians of Teaochan, the Spaniards now bent their course along the banks of the river Comagre, which descends the northern side of the Isthmus, and flows through the territories of the cacique of the same name. This wild stream, which in the course of ages had worn a channel through the deep clefts and ravines of the mountains, was bordered by precipices, or overhung by shagged forests; they soon abandoned it, therefore, and wandered on without any path, but guided by the Indians. They had to climb terrible precipices, and to descend into deep valleys, darkened by thick forests and beset by treacherous morasses, where, but for their guides, they might have been smothered in the mire.

In the course of this rugged journey they suffered excessively in consequence of their own avarice. They had been warned of the sterility of the country, and of the necessity of providing amply for the journey. When they came to lade the Indians, however, who bore their burdens, their only thought was how to convey the most treasure; and they grudged even a slender supply of provisions, as taking up the place of an equal weight of gold. The consequences were soon felt. The Indians could carry but small burdens, and at the same time assisted to consume the scanty stock of food which formed part of their load. Scarcity and famine ensued, and

* Herrera, decad. i. lib. x. cap. 4.

relief was rarely to be procured, for the villages on this elevated part of the mountains were scattered and poor, and nearly destitute of provisions. They held no communication with each other; each contenting itself with the scanty produce of its own fields and forest. Some were entirely deserted; at other places, the inhabitants, forced from their retreats, implored pardon, and declared they had hidden themselves through shame, not having the means of properly entertaining such celestial visitors. They brought peace-offerings of gold, but no provisions. For once the Spaniards found that even their darling gold could fail to cheer their drooping spirits. Their sufferings from hunger became intense, and many of their Indian companions sank down and perished by the way. At length they reached a village where they were enabled to obtain supplies, and where they remained thirty days, to recruit their wasted strength.

CHAPTER XIV.

Enterprise against Tubanama, the warlike Cacique of the Mountains—Return to Darien.

The Spaniards had now to pass through the territories of Tubanamà, the most potent and warlike cacique of the mountains. This was the same chieftain of whom a formidable character had been given by the young Indian prince, who first informed Vasco Nuñez of the Southern Sea. He had erroneously represented the dominions of Tubanamà as lying beyond the mountains; and, while he dwelt upon the quantities of gold to be found in them, had magnified the dangers of any attempt to pass their borders. The name of this redoubtable cacique was in fact a terror throughout the country; and when Vasco Nuñez looked round upon his handful of pale and emaciated followers, he doubted whether even the superiority of their weapons, and their military skill, would enable them to cope with Tubanamà and his armies in open contest. He resolved, therefore, upon a perilous stratagem. When he made it known to his men, every one pressed forward to engage in it. Choosing seventy of the most vigorous, he ordered the rest to maintain their post in the village.

As soon as night had fallen, he departed secretly with his chosen band, and made his way with such rapidity through the forests and defiles of the mountains, that he

arrived in the neighbourhood of the residence of Tubanamà by the following evening, though at the distance of two regular days' journey.

There wating until midnight, he assailed the village suddenly, and captured the cacique and his whole family, in which were eighty females. Tubanamà lost all presence of mind, and wept bitterly. The Indian allies beholding their once dreaded enemy thus fallen and captive, urged that he should be put to death, accusing him of various crimes and cruelties. Vasco Nuñez pretended to listen to their prayers, and gave orders that his captive should be tied hand and foot, and given to the dogs. The cacique approached him trembling, and laid his hand upon the pommel of his sword. "Who can pretend," said he, "to strive with one who bears this weapon, which can cleave a man asunder with a blow? Ever since thy fame has reached among these mountains, have I reverenced thy valour. Spare my life, and thou shalt have all the gold I can procure."

Vasco Nuñez, whose anger was assumed, was readily pacified. As soon as the day dawned, the cacique gave him armlets and other jewels of gold to the value of three thousand crowns, and sent messengers throughout his dominions ordering his subjects to aid in paying his ransom. The poor Indians, with their accustomed loyalty, hastened in crowds, bringing their golden ornaments, until, in the course of three days, they had produced an amount equal to six thousand crowns. This done, Vasco Nuñez set the cacique at liberty, bestowing on him several European trinkets, with which he considered himself richer than he had been with all his gold. Nothing would draw from him, however, the disclosure of the mines whence this treasure was procured. He declared that it came from the territories of his neighbours, where gold and pearls were to be found in abundance; but that his lands produced nothing of the kind. Vasco Nuñez doubted his sincerity, and secretly caused the brooks and rivers in his dominions to be searched, where gold was found in such quantities, that he determined, at a future time, to found two settlements in the neighbourhood.

On parting with Tubanamà, the cacique sent his son with the Spaniards to learn their language and religion. It is said, also, that the Spaniards carried off his eighty women; but of this particular fact Oviedo, who writes with the papers of Vasco Nuñez before him, says nothing. He affirms, generally, however, that the Spaniards,

throughout this expedition, were not scrupulous in their dealings with the wives and daughters of the Indians; and adds, that in this their commander set them the example.*

Having returned to the village where he had left the greater part of his men, Vasco Nuñez resumed his homeward march. His people were feeble and exhausted, and several of them sick; so that some had to be carried and others led by the arms He himself was part of the time afflicted by a fever, and had to be borne in a hammock on the shoulders of the Indians.

Proceeding thus slowly and toilfully, they at length arrived on the northern sea-coast, at the territories of their ally, Comagre. The old cacique was dead, and had been succeeded by his son, the same intelligent youth who had first given information of the Southern Sea and the kingdom of Peru. The young chief, who had embraced Christianity, received them with great hospitality, making them presents of gold. Vasco Nuñez gave him trinkets in return, and a shirt and a soldier's cloak; with which, says Peter Martyr, he thought himself half a god among his naked countrymen. After having reposed for a few days, Vasco Nuñez proceeded to Ponca, where he heard that a ship and caravel had arrived at Darien from Hispaniola, with reinforcements and supplies. Hastening, therefore, to Coyba, the territories of his ally, Careta, he embarked on the 18th of January, 1514, with twenty of his men, in the brigantine which he had left there, and arrived at Santa Maria de la Antigua, in the river of Darien, on the following day. All the inhabitants came forth to receive him; and when they heard the news of the great Southern Sea, and of his returning from its shores laden with pearls and gold, there were no bounds to their joy. He immediately despatched the ship and caravel to Coyba for the companions left behind, who brought with them the remaining booty, consisting of gold and pearls, mantles, hammocks, and other articles of cotton, and a great number of captives of both sexes. A fifth of the spoil was set apart for the crown; the rest was shared, in just proportions, among those who had been in the expedition, and those who had remained at Darien. All were contented with their allotment, and elated with the prospect of still greater gain from future enterprises.

Thus ended one of the most remarkable expeditions of the early discoverers. The intrepidity of Vasco Nuñez in

* Oviedo, Hist. Gen., Part II. cap. 4, MS.

penetrating, with a handful of men, far into the interior of a wild and mountainous country, peopled by warlike tribes; his skill in managing his band of rough adventurers, stimulating their valour, enforcing their obedience, and attaching their affections, show him to have possessed great qualities as a general. We are told that he was always foremost in peril, and the last to quit the field. He shared the toils and dangers of the meanest of his followers, treating them with frank affability; watching, fighting, fasting, and labouring with them; visiting and consoling such as were sick or infirm, and dividing all his gains with fairness and liberality. He was chargeable at times with acts of bloodshed and injustice, but it is probable that these were often called for as measures of safety and precaution; he certainly offended less against humanity than most of the early discoverers; and the unbounded amity and confidence reposed in him by the natives, when they became intimately acquainted with his character, speak strongly in favour of his kind treatment of them.

The character of Vasco Nuñez had, in fact, risen with his circumstances, and now assumed a nobleness and grandeur from the discovery he had made, and the important charge it had devolved upon him. He no longer felt himself a mere soldier of fortune, at the head of a band of adventurers, but a great commander conducting an immortal enterprise. "Behold," says old Peter Martyr, "Vasco Nuñez de Balboa, at once transformed from a rash royster to a politic and discreet captain:" and thus it is that men are often made by their fortunes; that is to say, their latent qualities are brought out, and shaped and strengthened by events, and by the necessity of every exertion to cope with the greatness of their destiny.

CHAPTER XV.

Transactions in Spain—Pedrarias Davila appointed to the command of Darien—Tidings received in Spain of the Discovery of the Pacific Ocean.

Vasco Nunez de Balboa now flattered himself that he had made a discovery calculated to silence all his enemies at court, and to elevate him to the highest favour with his sovereign. He wrote letters to the king, giving a detail of his expedition, and setting forth all that he had seen or heard of this Southern Sea, and of the rich countries upon its borders. Beside the royal fifths of the profits of the

expedition, he prepared a present for the sovereign in the name of himself and his companions, consisting of the largest and most precious pearls they had collected. As a trusty and intelligent envoy to bear these tidings, he chose Pedro de Arbolancha, an old and tried friend, who had accompanied him in his toils and dangers, and was well acquainted with all his transactions.

The fate of Vasco Nuñez furnishes a striking instance how prosperity and adversity, how even life and death, hang balanced upon a point of time, and are affected by the improvement or neglect of moments. Unfortunately the ship which was to convey the messenger to Spain lingered in port until the beginning of March; a delay which had a fatal influence on the fortunes of Vasco Nuñez. It is necessary here to cast an eye back upon the events which had taken place in Spain while he was employed in his conquests and discoveries.

The Bachelor Enciso had arrived in Castile full of his wrongs and indignities. He had friends at court, who aided him in gaining a ready hearing, and he lost not a moment in availing himself of it. He declaimed eloquently upon the alleged usurpation of Vasco Nuñez, and represented him as governing the colony by force and fraud. It was in vain that the alcalde Zamudio, the ancient colleague and the envoy of Vasco Nuñez, attempted to speak in his defence; he was unable to cope with the facts and arguments of the Bachelor, who was a pleader by profession, and now pleaded his own cause. The king determined to send a new governor to Darien, with power to inquire into and remedy all abuses. For this office he chose Don Pedro Arias Davila, commonly called Pedrarias.* He was a native of Segovia, who had been brought up in the royal household, and had distinguished himself as a brave soldier, both in the war of Granada and at the taking of Oran and Bugia in Africa. He possessed those personal accomplishments which captivate the soldiery, and was called *el galán*, for his gallant array and courtly demeanour, and *el Justador*, or *the Tilter*, for his dexterity in jousts and tournaments. These, it must be admitted, were not the qualifications most adapted for the government of rude and factious colonies in a wilderness; but he had an all-powerful friend in the Bishop Fonseca. The bishop was as thorough-going in patronage as in persecution. He assured the king that Pedrarias had understanding equal to his valour; that he was as capable of

* By the English historians he has generally been called Davila.

managing the affairs of peace as of war, and that, having been brought up in the royal household, his loyalty might be implicitly relied on.

Scarcely had Don Pedrarias been appointed, when Cayzedo and Colmenares arrived on their mission from Darien to communicate the intelligence received from the son of the cacique Comagre, of the Southern Sea beyond the mountains, and to ask one thousand men to enable Vasco Nuñez to make the discovery.

The avarice and ambition of Ferdinand were inflamed by the tidings. He rewarded the bearers of the intelligence, and, after consulting with Bishop Fonseca, resolved to despatch immediately a powerful armada, with twelve hundred men, under the command of Pedrarias, to accomplish the enterprise.

Just about this time the famous Gonsalvo Hernandez de Cordova, commonly called the Great Captain, was preparing to return to Naples, where the allies of Spain had experienced a signal defeat, and had craved the assistance of this renowned general to retrieve their fortunes. The chivalry of Spain thronged to enlist under the banner of Gonsalvo. The Spanish nobles, with their accustomed prodigality, sold or mortgaged their estates to buy gorgeous armour, silks, brocades, and other articles of martial pomp and luxury, that they might figure, with becoming magnificence, in the campaigns of Italy. The armament was on the point of sailing for Naples with this host of proud and gallant spirits, when the jealous mind of Ferdinand took offence at the enthusiasm thus shown towards his general, and he abruptly countermanded the expedition. The Spanish cavaliers were overwhelmed with disappointment at having their dreams of glory thus suddenly dispelled; when, as if to console them, the enterprise of Pedrarias was set on foot, and opened a different career of adventure. The very idea of an unknown sea and splendid empire, where never European ship had sailed nor foot had trodden, broke upon the imagination with the vague wonders of an Arabian tale. Even the countries already known, in the vicinity of the settlement of Darien, were described in the usual terms of exaggeration. Gold was said to lie on the surface of the ground, or to be gathered with nets out of the brooks and rivers; insomuch that the region hitherto called Terra Firma now received the pompous and delusive appellation of Castilla del Oro, or Golden Castile.

Excited by these reports, many of the youthful cava-

liers, who had prepared for the Italian campaign, now offered themselves as volunteers to Don Pedrarias. He accepted their services, and appointed Seville as the place of assemblage. The streets of that ancient city soon swarmed with young and noble cavaliers splendidly arrayed, full of spirits, and eager for the sailing of the Indian armada. Pedrarias, on his arrival at Seville, made a general review of his forces, and was embarrassed to find that the number amounted to three thousand. He had been limited in his first armament to twelve hundred; on representing the nature of the case, however, the number was extended to fifteen hundred; but through influence, entreaty, and stratagem, upwards of two thousand eventually embarked.* Happy did he think himself who could in any manner, and by any means, get admitted on board of the squadron. Nor was this eagerness for the enterprise confined merely to young and buoyant and ambitious adventurers; we are told that there were many covetous old men, who offered to go at their own expense, without seeking any pay from the king. Thus every eye was turned with desire to this squadron of modern argonauts as it lay anchored on the bosom of the Guadalquiver.

The pay and appointments of Don Pedrarias Davila were on the most liberal scale, and no expense was spared in fitting out the armament; for the objects of the expedition were both colonization and conquest. Artillery and powder were procured from Malaga. Beside the usual weapons, such as muskets, cross-bows, swords, pikes, lances, and Neapolitan targets, there was armour devised of quilted cotton, as being light and better adapted to the climate, and sufficiently proof against the weapons of the Indians; and wooden bucklers from the Canary Islands, to ward off the poisoned arrows of the Caribs.

Santa Maria de la Antigua was, by royal ordinance, elevated into the metropolitan city of Golden Castile, and a Franciscan friar, named Juan de Quevedo, was appointed as bishop, with powers to decide in all cases of conscience. A number of friars were nominated to accompany him, and he was provided with the necessary furniture and vessels for a chapel.

Among the various regulations made for the good of the infant colony, it was ordained that no lawyers should be admitted there, it having been found at Hispaniola and elsewhere, that they were detrimental to the welfare of the settlements, by fomenting disputes and litigations.

* Oviedo, lib. ii. cap. 7, MS.

The judicial affairs were to be entirely confided to the Licentiate Gaspar de Espinosa, who was to officiate as alcalde mayor or chief judge.

Don Pedrarias had intended to leave his wife in Spain. Her name was Doña Isabella de Bobadilla; she was niece to the Marchioness de Moya, a great favourite of the late Queen Isabella, who had been instrumental in persuading her royal mistress to patronize Columbus.* Her niece partook of her high and generous nature. She refused to remain behind in selfish security, but declared that she would accompany her husband in every peril, whether by sea or land. This self-devotion is the more remarkable, when it is considered that she was past the romantic period of youth; and that she left behind her in Spain a family of four sons and four daughters.

Don Pedrarias was instructed to use great indulgence towards the people of Darien, who had been the followers of Nicuesa, and to remit the royal tithe of all the gold they might have collected previous to his arrival. Towards Vasco Nuñez de Balboa alone the royal countenance was stern and severe. Pedrarias was to depose him from his assumed authority, and to call him to strict account before the alcalde mayor, Gaspar de Espinosa, for his treatment of the Bachelor Enciso.

The splendid fleet, consisting of fifteen sail, weighed anchor at St. Lucar on the 12th of April, 1514, and swept proudly out of the Guadalquiver, thronged with the chivalrous adventurers for Golden Castile. But a short time had elapsed after its departure, when Pedro Arbolancho arrived with the tardy missions of Vasco Nuñez. Had he arrived a few days sooner, how different might have been the fortune of his friend!

He was immediately admitted to the royal presence, where he announced the adventurous and successful expedition of Vasco Nuñez, and laid before the king the pearls and golden ornaments brought as the first fruits of the discovery. King Ferdinand listened with charmed attention to this tale of unknown seas and wealthy realms added to his empire. It filled, in fact, the imaginations of the most sage and learned with golden dreams, and anticipations of unbounded riches. Old Peter Martyr, who received letters from his friends in Darien, and communi-

* This was the same Marchioness de Moya who, during the war of Granada, while the court and royal army were encamped before Malaga, was mistaken for the queen by a Moorish fanatic, and had nearly fallen beneath his dagger.

eated by word of mouth with those who came from thence, writes to Leo the Tenth in exulting terms of this event. "Spain," says he, "will hereafter be able to satisfy with pearls the greedy appetite of such as in wanton pleasures are like unto Cleopatra and Æsopus; so that henceforth we shall neither envy nor reverence the nice fruitfulness of Trapoban or the Red Sea. The Spaniards will not need hereafter to mine and dig far into the earth, nor to cut asunder mountains in quest of gold, but will find it plentifully, in a manner, on the upper crust of the earth, or in the sands of rivers dried up by the heats of summer. Certainly the reverend antiquity obtained not so great a benefit of nature, nor even aspired to the knowledge thereof, since never man before, from the known world, penetrated to these unknown regions."*

The tidings of this discovery made all Spain resound with the praises of Vasco Nuñez; and, from being considered a lawless and desperate adventurer, he was lauded to the skies as a worthy successor to Columbus. The king repented of the harshness of his late measures towards him, and ordered the Bishop Fonseca to devise some mode of rewarding his transcendant services.

CHAPTER XVI.

Arrival and grand Entry of Don Pedrarias Davila into Darien.

While honours and rewards were preparing in Europe for Vasco Nuñez, that indefatigable commander, inspired by his fortunes with redoubled zeal and loftier ambition, was exercising the paternal forethought and discretion of a patriotic governor over the country subjected to his rule. His most strenuous exertions were directed to bring the neighbourhood of Darien into such a state of cultivation as might render the settlement independent of Europe for supplies. The town was situated on the banks of a river, and contained upwards of two hundred houses and cabins. Its population amounted to five hundred and fifteen Europeans, all men, and fifteen hundred Indians, male and female. Orchards and gardens had been laid out, where European as well as native fruits and vegetables were cultivated, and already gave promise of future abundance. Vasco Nuñez devised all kinds of means to keep up the spirits of his people. On holidays they had

* P. Martyr, decad. iii. cap. 3, Lok's translation.

their favourite national sports and games, and particularly tilting-matches, of which chivalrous amusement the Spaniards in those days were extravagantly fond. Sometimes he gratified their restless and roving habits by sending them in expeditions to various parts of the country, to acquire a knowledge of its resources, and to strengthen his sway over the natives. He was so successful in securing the amity or exciting the awe of the Indian tribes, that a Spaniard might go singly about the land in perfect safety; while his own followers were zealous in their devotion to him, both from admiration of his past exploits and from hopes of soon being led by him to new discoveries and conquests. Peter Martyr, in his letter to Leo the Tenth, speaks in high terms of these "old soldiers of Darien," the remnants of those well-tried adventurers who had followed the fortunes of Ojeda, Nicuesa, and Vasco Nuñez. "They were hardened," says he, "to abide all sorrows, and were exceedingly tolerant of labour, heat, hunger, and watching, insomuch that they merrily make their boast that they have observed a longer and sharper Lent than even your Holiness enjoined, since, for the space of four years, their food has been herbs and fruits, with now and then fish, and very seldom flesh."*

Such were the hardy and well-seasoned veterans that were under the sway of Vasco Nuñez; and the colony gave signs of rising in prosperity under his active and fostering management, when, in the month of June, the fleet of Don Pedrarias Davila arrived in the Gulf of Uraba.

The Spanish cavaliers who accompanied the new governor were eager to get on shore, and to behold the anticipated wonders of the land; but Pedrarias, knowing the resolute character of Vasco Nuñez, and the devotion of his followers, apprehended some difficulty in getting possession of the colony. Anchoring, therefore, about a league and a half from the settlement, he sent a messenger on shore to announce his arrival. The envoy, having heard so much in Spain of the prowess and exploits of Vasco Nuñez, and the riches of Golden Castile, expected, no doubt, to find a blustering warrior, maintaining barbaric state in the government which he had usurped. Great was his astonishment therefore to find this redoubtable hero a plain unassuming man, clad in a cotton frock and drawers, and hempen sandals, directing and aiding the labour of several Indians, who were thatching a cottage in which he resided.

* P. Martyr, decad. iii. cap. 3, Lok's translation.

The messenger approached him respectfully, and announced the arrival of Don Pedrarias Davila as governor of the country.

Whatever Vasco Nuñez may have felt at this intelligence, he suppressed his emotions, and answered the messenger with great discretion; "Tell Don Pedrarias Davila," said he, "that he is welcome, and I congratulate him on his safe arrival, and am ready, with all who are here, to obey his orders."

The little community of rough and daring adventurers was in an uproar when they found a new governor had arrived. Some of the most zealous adherents of Vasco Nuñez were disposed to sally forth, sword in hand, and repel the intruder; but they were restrained by their more considerate chieftain, who prepared to receive the new governor with all due submission.

Pedrarias disembarked on the thirtieth of June, accompanied by his heroic wife, Doña Isabella; who, according to old Peter Martyr, had sustained the roarings and rages of the ocean, with no less stout courage than either her husband or the mariners who had been brought up among the surges of the sea.

Pedrarias set out for the embryo city at the head of two thousand men, all well armed. He led his wife by the hand, and on the other side of him was the bishop of Darien in his robes; while a brilliant train of youthful cavaliers, in glittering armour and brocade, formed a kind of body-guard.

All this pomp and splendour formed a striking contrast with the humble state of Vasco Nuñez, who came forth unarmed, in simple attire, accompanied by his counsellors, and a handful of the "old soldiers of Darien," scarred and battered, and grown half wild in Indian warfare, but without weapons, and in garments much the worse for wear.

Vasco Nuñez saluted Don Pedrarias Davila with profound reverence, and promised him implicit obedience, both in his own name, and in the name of the community. Having entered the town, he conducted his distinguished guests to his straw-thatched habitation, where he had caused a repast to be prepared of such cheer as his means afforded, consisting of roots and fruits, maize and cassava bread, with no other beverage than water from the river; —a sorry palace and a meagre banquet in the eyes of the gay cavaliers, who had anticipated far other things from the usurper of Golden Castile. Vasco Nuñez, however, acquitted himself in his humble wigwam with the courtesy

and hospitality of a prince, and showed that the dignity of an entertainment depends more upon the giver than the feast. In the meantime a plentiful supply of European provisions was landed from the fleet, and a temporary abundance was diffused through the colony.

CHAPTER XVII.

Perfidious Conduct of Don Pedrarias towards Vasco Nunez.

On the day after his entrance into Darien, Don Pedrarias held a private conference with Vasco Nuñez, in presence of the historian Oviedo, who had come out from Spain as public notary of the colony. The governor commenced by assuring him that he was instructed by the king to treat him with great favour and distinction, to consult him about the affairs of the colony, and to apply to him for information relative to the surrounding country. At the same time he professed the most amicable feelings on his own part, and an intention to be guided by his counsels in all public measures.

Vasco Nuñez was of a frank confiding nature, and was so captivated by this unexpected courtesy and kindness, that he threw off all caution and reserve, and opened his whole soul to the politic courtier. Pedrarias availed himself of this communicative mood to draw from him a minute and able statement in writing, detailing the circumstances of the colony, and the information collected respecting various parts of the country; the route by which he had traversed the mountains; his discovery of the South Sea; the situation and reputed wealth of the Pearl Islands; the rivers and ravines most productive of gold; together with the names and territories of the various caciques with whom he had made treaties.

When Pedrarias had thus beguiled the unsuspecting soldier of all the information necessary for his purposes, he dropped the mask, and within a few days proclaimed a judicial scrutiny into the conduct of Vasco Nuñez and his officers. It was to be conducted by the licentiate Gaspar de Espinosa, who had come as alcalde mayor, or chief judge. The licentiate was an inexperienced lawyer, having but recently left the university of Salamanca. He appears to have been somewhat flexible in his opinions, and prone to be guided or governed by others. At the outset of his career he was much under the influence of Quevedo, the

bishop of Darien. Now, as Vasco Nuñez knew the importance of this prelate in the colony, he had taken care to secure him to his interests by paying him the most profound deference and respect, and by giving him a share in his agricultural enterprises, and his schemes of traffic. In fact, the good bishop looked upon him as one eminently calculated to promote his temporal prosperity, to which he was by no means insensible. Under the influence of the prelate, therefore, the alcalde commenced his investigation in the most favourable manner. He went largely into an examination of the discoveries of Vasco Nuñez, and of the nature and extent of his various services. The governor was alarmed at the course which the inquiry was taking. If thus conducted, it would but serve to illustrate the merits and elevate the reputation of the man whom it was his interest and intent to ruin. To counteract it, he immediately set on foot a secret and invidious course of interrogatories of the followers of Nicuesa and Ojeda, to draw from them testimony which might support the charge against Vasco Nuñez of usurpation and tyrannical abuse of power. The bishop and the alcalde received information of the inquisition, carried on thus secretly, and without their sanction. They remonstrated warmly against it, as an infringement of their rights, being coadjutors in the government; and they spurned the testimony of the followers of Ojeda and Nicuesa, as dictated and discoloured by ancient enmity. Vasco Nuñez was therefore acquitted by them of the criminal charges made against him, though he remained involved in difficulties from the suits brought against him by individuals, for losses and damages occasioned by his measures.

Pedrarias was incensed at this acquittal, and insisted upon the guilt of Vasco Nuñez, which he pretended to have established to his conviction by his secret investigations; and he even determined to send him in chains to Spain, to be tried for the death of Nicuesa, and for other imputed offences.

It was not the inclination or the interest of the bishop that Vasco Nuñez should leave the colony; he therefore managed to awaken the jealous apprehensions of the governor as to the effect of his proposed measure. He intimated that the arrival of Vasco Nuñez in Spain would be signalized by triumph rather than disgrace. By that time his grand discoveries would be blazoned to the world, and would atone for all his faults. He would be received with enthusiasm by the nation, with favour by the king,

and would probably be sent back to the colony clothed with new dignity and power.

Pedrarias was placed in a perplexing dilemma by these suggestions; his violent proceedings against Vasco Nuñez were also in some measure restrained by the influence of his wife, Doña Isabel de Bobadilla, who felt a great respect and sympathy for the discoverer. In his perplexity, the wily governor adopted a middle course. He resolved to detain Vasco Nuñez at Darien under a cloud of imputation, which would gradually impair his popularity; while his patience and means would be silently consumed by protracted and expensive litigation. In the meantime, however, the property which had been sequestrated was restored to him.

While Pedrarias treated Vasco Nuñez with this severity, he failed not to avail himself of the plans of that able commander. The first of these was to establish a line of posts across the mountains between Darien and the South Sea. It was his eager desire to execute this before any order should arrive from the king in favour of his predecessor, in order that he might have the credit of having colonized the coast, and Vasco Nuñez merely that of having discovered and visited it.* Before he could complete these arrangements, however, unlooked-for calamities fell upon the settlement, that for a time interrupted every project, and made every one turn his thoughts merely to his own security.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Calamities of the Spanish Cavaliers at Darien.

The town of Darien was situated in a deep valley surrounded by lofty hills, which, while they kept off the breezes so grateful in a sultry climate, reflected and concentrated the rays of the sun, insomuch that at noontide the heat was insupportable; the river which passed it was shallow, with a muddy channel, and bordered by marshes; overhanging forests added to the general humidity, and the very soil on which the town was built was of such a nature, that on digging to the depth of a foot there would ooze forth brackish water.†

It is not matter of surprise that a situation of this kind,

* Oviedo, Hist. Ind., page 2, cap. 8.
† Peter Martyr, decad. iii. cap. 6.

in a tropical climate, should be fatal to the health of Europeans. Many who had recently arrived were swept off speedily; Pedrarias himself fell sick, and was removed, with most of his people, to a healthier spot on the river Corobari; the malady, however, continued to increase. The provisions brought out in the ships had been partly damaged by the sea, the residue grew scanty, and the people were put upon short allowance; the debility thus produced increased the ravages of disease; at length the provisions were exhausted, and the horrors of absolute famine ensued.

Every one was more or less affected by these calamities; even the veterans of the colony quailed beneath them; but to none were they more fatal than to the crowd of youthful cavaliers who had once glittered so gaily about the streets of Seville, and had come out to the New World elated with the most sanguine expectations. From the very moment of their landing they had been disheartened at the savage scenes around them, and disgusted with the squalid life they were doomed to lead. They shrunk with disdain from the labours with which alone wealth was to be procured in this land of gold and pearls, and were impatient of the humble exertions necessary for the maintenance of existence. As the famine increased, their case became desperate; for they were unable to help themselves, and their rank and dignity commanded neither deference nor aid at a time when common misery made every one selfish. Many of them, who had mortgaged estates in Spain to fit themselves out sumptuously for their Italian campaign, now perished for lack of food. Some would be seen bartering a robe of crimson silk, or some garment of rich brocade, for a pound of Indian bread or European biscuit; others sought to satisfy the cravings of hunger with the herbs and roots of the field, and one of the principal cavaliers absolutely expired of hunger in the public streets.

In this wretched way, and in the short space of one month, perished seven hundred of the little army of youthful and buoyant spirits who had embarked with Pedrarias. The bodies of some remained for a day or two without sepulture, their friends not having sufficient strength to bury them. Unable to remedy the evil, Pedrarias gave permission for his men to flee from it. A ship-load of starving adventurers departed for Cuba, where some of them joined the standard of Diego Velasquez, who was colonizing that island; others made their way back to

Spain, where they arrived broken in health, in spirits, and in fortune.

CHAPTER XIX.

Fruitless Expedition of Pedrarias.

The departure of so many hungry mouths was some temporary relief to the colony; and Pedrarias, having recovered from his malady, bestirred himself to send expeditions in various directions for the purpose of foraging the country and collecting treasure.

These expeditions, however, were intrusted to his own favourites and partisans; while Vasco Nuñez, the man most competent to carry them into effect, remained idle and neglected. A judicial inquiry, tardily carried on, overshadowed him, and though it substantiated nothing, served to embarrass his actions, to cool his friends, and to give him the air of a public delinquent. Indeed to the other evils of the colony was now added that of excessive litigation, arising out of the disputes concerning the government of Vasco Nuñez, and which increased to such a degree, that, according to the report of the alcalde Espinosa, if the lawsuits should be divided among the people, at least forty would fall to each man's share.* This too was in a colony into which the government had commanded that no lawyer should be admitted!

Wearied and irritated by the check given to his favourite enterprises, and confident of the ultimate approbation of the king, Vasco Nuñez determined to take his fortunes in his own hands, and to prosecute in secret his grand project of exploring the regions beyond the mountains. For this purpose, he privately despatched one Andres Garabito to Cuba to enlist men, and make provisions for an expedition across the isthmus, from Nombre de Dios, and for the founding a colony on the shores of the Southern Ocean; whence he proposed to extend his discoveries by sea and land.

While Vasco Nuñez awaited the return of Garabito, he had the mortification of beholding various of his colonizing plans pursued and marred by Pedrarias. Among other enterprises the governor despatched his lieutenant-general Juan de Ayora, at the head of four hundred men, to visit the provinces of those caciques with whom Vasco Nuñez had sojourned and made treaties on his expedition

* Herrera, decad. ii. lib. i. cap. 1.

to the Southern Sea. Ayora partook of the rash and domineering spirit of Pedrarias, and harassed and devastated the countries which he pretended to explore. He was received with amity and confidence by various caciques who had formed treaties with Vasco Nuñez; but he repaid their hospitality with the basest ingratitude, seizing upon their property, taking from them their wives and daughters, and often torturing them to make them reveal their hidden or supposed treasures. Among those treated with this perfidy, we grieve to enumerate the youthful cacique who first gave Vasco Nuñez information of the sea beyond the mountains.

The enormities of Ayora and of other captains of Pedrarias produced the usual effect; the natives were roused to desperate resistance; caciques, who had been faithful friends, were converted into furious enemies, and the expedition ended in disappointment and disaster.

The adherents of Vasco Nuñez did not fail to contrast these disastrous enterprises with those which had been conducted with so much glory and advantage by their favourite commander; and their sneers and reproaches had such an effect upon the jealous and irritable disposition of Pedrarias, that he determined to employ their idol in a service likely to be attended with defeat and to impair his popularity. None seemed more fitting for the purpose than an expedition to Dobayba, where he had once already attempted in vain to penetrate, and where so many of his followers had fallen victims to the stratagems and assaults of the natives.

CHAPTER XX.

Second Expedition of Vasco Nunez in quest of the Gold Temple of Dobayba.

The rich mines of Dobayba, and the treasures of its golden temple, had continued a favourite theme with the Spanish adventurers. It was ascertained that Vasco Nuñez had stopped short of the wealthy region on his former expedition, and had mistaken a frontier village for the residence of the cacique. The enterprise of the temple was, therefore, still to be achieved; and it was solicited by several of the cavaliers in the train of Pedrarias, with all the chivalrous ardour of that romantic age. Indeed common report had invested the enterprise with difficulties and danger sufficient to stimulate the ambition of the keenest seeker of adventure. The savages who inhabited

that part of the country were courageous and adroit. They fought by water as well as by land, forming ambuscades with their canoes in the bays and rivers. The country was intersected by dreary fens and morasses, infested by all kinds of reptiles. Clouds of gnats and musquitoes filled the air; there were large bats also, supposed to have the baneful properties of the vampire; alligators lurked in the waters, and the gloomy recesses of the fens were said to be the dens of dragons.*

Beside these objects of terror, both true and fabulous, the old historian, Peter Martyr, makes mention of another monstrous animal said to infest this golden region, and which deserves to be cited, as showing the imaginary dangers with which the active minds of the discoverers peopled the unexplored wilderness around them.

According to the tales of the Indians, there had occurred, shortly before the arrival of the Spaniards, a violent tempest, or rather hurricane, in the neighbourhood of Dobayba, which demolished houses, tore up trees by the roots, and laid waste whole forests. When the tempest had subsided and the affrighted inhabitants ventured to look abroad, they found that two monstrous animals had been brought into the country by the hurricane. According to their accounts, they were not unlike the ancient harpies, and one being smaller than the other was supposed to be its young. They had the faces of women, with the claws and wings of eagles, and were of such prodigious size that the very boughs of the trees on which they alighted broke beneath them. They would swoop down and carry off a man as a hawk would bear off a chicken, flying with him to the tops of the mountains, where they would tear him in pieces and devour him. For some time they were the scourge and terror of the land, until the Indians succeeded in killing the old one by stratagem, and hanging her on their long spears, bore her through all the towns to assuage the alarm of the inhabitants. The younger harpy, says the Indian tradition, was never seen afterwards.†

Such were some of the perils, true and fabulous, with which the land of Dobayba was said to abound; and, in fact, the very Indians had such a dread of its dark and dismal morasses, that, in their journeyings they carefully avoided them, preferring the circuitous and rugged paths of the mountains.

Several of the youthful cavaliers, as has been observed,

* P. Martyr. † Idem, decad. vii. cap. 10.

were stimulated rather than deterred by these dangers, and contended for the honour of the expedition; but Pedrarias selected his rival for the task, hoping, as has been hinted, that it would involve him in disgrace. Vasco Nuñez promptly accepted the enterprise, for his pride was concerned in its success. Two hundred resolute men were given to him for the purpose; but his satisfaction was diminished when he found that Luis Carillo, an officer of Pedrarias, who had failed in a perilous enterprise, was associated with him in the command.

Few particulars remain to us of the events of this affair. They embarked in a fleet of canoes, and traversing the gulf, arrived at the river which flowed down from the region of Dobayba. They were not destined, however, to achieve the enterprise of the golden temple. As they were proceeding rather confidently and unguardedly up the river, they were surprised and surrounded by a swarm of canoes, filled with armed savages, which darted out from lurking-places along the shores. Some of the Indians assailed them with lances, others with clouds of arrows, while some, plunging into the water, endeavoured to overturn their canoes. In this way one-half of the Spaniards were killed or drowned. Among the number fell Luis Carillo, pierced through the breast by an Indian lance. Vasco Nuñez himself was wounded, and had great difficulty in escaping to the shore with the residue of his forces.

The Indians pursued him, and kept up a skirmishing attack, but he beat them off until the night, when he silently abandoned the shore of the river, and directed his retreat towards Darien. It is easier to imagine than to describe the toils and dangers and horrors which beset him and the remnant of his men as they traversed rugged mountains, or struggled through the fearful morasses of which they had heard such terrific tales. At length they succeeded in reaching the settlement of Darien.

The partisans of Pedrarias exulted in seeing Vasco Nuñez return thus foiled and wounded, and taunted his adherents with their previous boastings. The latter, however, laid all the blame upon the unfortunate Carillo. "Vasco Nuñez," said they, "had always absolute command in his former enterprises, but in this he has been embarrassed by an associate. Had the expedition been confided to him alone, the event had been far different."

CHAPTER XXI.

Letters from the King in Favour of Vasco Nunez—Arrival of Garabito—Arrest of Vasco Nunez.

[1515.]

About this time despatches arrived from Spain which promised to give a new turn to the fortunes of Vasco Nuñez and to the general affairs of the colony. They were written after the tidings of the discovery of the South Sea, and the subjugation of so many important provinces of the Isthmus. In a letter addressed to Vasco Nuñez, the king expressed his high sense of his merits and services, and constituted him Adelantado of the South Sea, and Governor of the provinces of Panama and Coyba, though subordinate to the general command of Pedrarias. A letter was likewise written by the king to Pedrarias, informing him of this appointment, and ordering him to consult Vasco Nuñez on all public affairs of importance. This was a humiliating blow to the pride and consequence of Pedrarias, but he hoped to parry it. In the meantime, as all letters from Spain were first delivered into his hands, he withheld that intended for Vasco Nuñez, until he should determine what course of conduct to adopt. The latter, however, heard of the circumstance, as did his friend the bishop of Darien. The prelate made loud complaints of this interruption of the royal correspondence, which he denounced, even from the pulpit, as an outrage upon the rights of the subject, and an act of disobedience to the sovereign.

Upon this the governor called a council of his public officers; and, after imparting the contents of his letter, requested their opinion as to the propriety of investing Vasco Nuñez with the dignities thus granted to him. The alcalde mayor, Espinosa, had left the party of the bishop, and was now devoted to the governor. He insisted, vehemently, that the offices ought in nowise to be given to Vasco Nuñez, until the king should be informed of the result of the inquest still going on against him. In this he was warmly supported by the treasurer and the accountant. The bishop replied, indignantly, that it was presumptuous and disloyal in them to dispute the commands of the king, and to interfere with the rewards conscientiously given by him to a meritorious subject. In this way, he added, they were defeating, by their passions, the grateful intentions of their sovereign. The

governor was overawed by the honest warmth of the bishop, and professed to accord with him in opinion. The council lasted until midnight; and it was finally agreed that the titles and dignities should be conferred on Vasco Nuñez on the following day.*

Pedrarias and his officers reflected, however, that if the jurisdiction implied by these titles were absolutely vested in Vasco Nuñez, the government of Darien and Castilla del Oro would virtually be reduced to a trifling matter; they resolved, therefore, to adopt a middle course; to grant him the empty titles, but to make him give security not to enter upon the actual government of the territories in question, until Pedrarias should give him permission. The bishop and Vasco Nuñez assented to this arrangement; satisfied, for the present, with securing the titles, and trusting to the course of events to get dominion over the territories.†

The new honours of Vasco Nuñez were now promulgated to the world, and he was everywhere addressed by the title of Adelantado. His old friends lifted up their heads with exultation, and new adherents flocked to his standard. Parties began to form for him and for Pedrarias; for it was deemed impossible they could continue long in harmony.

The jealousy of the governor was excited by these circumstances; and he regarded the newly-created Adelantado as a dangerous rival and an insidious foe. Just at this critical juncture, Andres Garabito, the agent of Vasco Nuñez, arrived on the coast in a vessel which he had procured at Cuba, and freighted with arms and ammunition, and seventy resolute men, for the secret expedition to the shores of the Pacific Ocean. He anchored six leagues from the harbour, and sent word privately to Vasco Nuñez of his arrival.

Information was immediately carried to Pedrarias that a mysterious vessel, full of armed men, was hovering on the coast, and holding secret communication with his rival. The suspicious temper of the governor immediately took the alarm. He fancied some treasonable plot against his authority; his passions mingled with his fears; and, in the first burst of his fury, he ordered that Vasco Nuñez should be seized and confined in a wooden cage. The

* Oviedo, part ii. cap. 9, MS. Oviedo, the historian, was present at this consultation, and says that he wrote down the opinions given on the occasion, which the parties signed with their proper hands.

† Idem.

bishop of Darien interposed in time to prevent an indignity which it might have been impossible to expiate. He prevailed upon the passionate governor, not merely to retract the order respecting the cage, but to examine the whole matter with coolness and deliberation. The result proved that his suspicions had been erroneous, and that the armament had been set on foot without any treasonable intent. Vasco Nuñez was therefore set at liberty, after having agreed to certain precautionary conditions; but he remained cast down in spirit and impoverished in fortune by the harassing measures of Pedrarias.

CHAPTER XXII.

Expedition of Morales and Pizarro to the Shores of the Pacific Ocean—Their Visit to the Pearl Islands—Their disastrous Return across the Mountains.

The bishop of Darien, encouraged by the success of his intercession, endeavoured to persuade the governor to permit the departure of Vasco Nuñez on his expedition to the South Sea. The jealousy of Pedrarias, however, was too strong to allow him to listen to such counsel. He was aware of the importance of the expedition, and was anxious that the Pearl Islands should be explored, which promised such abundant treasures; but he feared to increase the popularity of Vasco Nuñez, by adding such an enterprise to the number of his achievements. Pedrarias, therefore, set on foot an expedition, consisting of sixty men, but gave the command to one of his own relations, named Gaspar Morales. The latter was accompanied by Francisco Pizarro, who had already been to those parts in the train of Vasco Nuñez, and who soon rose to importance in the present enterprise by his fierce courage and domineering genius.

A brief notice of the principal incidents of this expedition is all that is necessary for the present narration.

Morales and Pizarro traversed the mountains of the isthmus by a shorter and more expeditious route than that which had been taken by Vasco Nuñez, and arrived on the shores of the South Sea at the territories of a cacique named Tutibrà, by whom they were amicably entertained. Their great object was to visit the Pearl Islands: the cacique, however, had but four canoes, which were insufficient to contain their whole party. One half of their number, therefore, remained at the village of Tutibrà,

under the command of a captain named Peñalosa; the residue embarked in the canoes with Morales and Pizarro. After a stormy and perilous voyage, they landed on one of the smaller islands, where they had some skirmishing with the natives, and thence made their way to the principal island of the Archipelago, to which, from the report of its great pearl-fishery, Vasco Nuñez had given the name of Isla Rica.

The cacique of this island had long been the terror of the neighbouring coasts, invading the main-land with fleets of canoes, and carrying the inhabitants into captivity. His reception of the Spaniards was worthy of his fame. Four times did he sally forth to defend his territory, and as often was he repulsed with great slaughter. His warriors were overwhelmed with terror at the fire-arms of the Spaniards, and at their ferocious bloodhounds. Finding all resistance unavailing, the cacique was at length compelled to sue for peace. His prayers being granted, he received the conquerors into his habitation, which was well built and of immense size. Here he brought them as a peace-offering a basket curiously wrought, and filled with pearls of great beauty. Among these were two of extraordinary size and value. One weighed twenty-five carats; the other was of the size of a Muscadine pear, weighing upwards of three drachms, and of oriental colour and lustre. The cacique considered himself more than repaid by a present of hatchets, beads, and hawks'-bells; and, on the Spaniards smiling at his joy, observed, "These things I can turn to useful purpose, but of what value are those pearls to me?"

Finding, however, that these baubles were precious in the eyes of the Spaniards, he took Morales and Pizarro to the summit of a wooden tower, commanding an unbounded prospect. "Behold before you," said he, "the infinite sea, which extends even beyond the sunbeams. As to these islands which lie to the right and left, they are all subject to my sway. They possess but little gold, but the deep places of the sea around them are full of pearls. Continue to be my friends, and you shall have as many as you desire; for I value your friendship more than pearls, and, as far as in me lies, will never forfeit it."

He then pointed to the main-land, where it stretched away towards the east, mountain beyond mountain, until the summit of the last faded in the distance, and was scarcely seen above the watery horizon. In that direction, he said, there lay a vast country of inexhaustible riches,

inhabited by a mighty nation. He went on to repeat the vague but wonderful rumours which the Spaniards had frequently heard about the great kingdom of Peru. Pizarro listened greedily to his words, and while his eye followed the finger of the cacique, as it ranged along the line of shadowy coast, his daring mind kindled with the thought of seeking this golden empire beyond the waters.*

Before leaving the island, the two captains impressed the cacique with so great an idea of the power of the king of Castile, that he agreed to become his vassal, and to render him an annual tribute of one hundred pounds' weight of pearls.

The party having returned in safety to the main-land, though to a different place from that where they had embarked, Gaspar Morales sent his relation, Bernardo Morales, with ten men in quest of Peñalosa and his companions, who had remained in the village of Tutibrà.

Unfortunately for the Spaniards, during the absence of the commanders, this Peñalosa had so exasperated the natives by his misconduct, that a conspiracy had been formed by the caciques along the coast to massacre the whole of the strangers, when the party should return from the islands.

Bernardo Morales and his companions, on their way in quest of Peñalosa, put up for the night in the village of a cacique named Chuchama, who was one of the conspirators. They were entertained with pretended hospitality. In the dead of the night, however, the house in which they were sleeping was wrapped in flames, and most of them were destroyed. Chuchama then prepared with his confederates to attack the main body of the Spaniards who remained with Morales and Pizarro.

Fortunately for the latter, there was among the Indians who had accompanied them to the islands a cacique named Chirucà, who was in secret correspondence with the conspirators. Some circumstances in his conduct excited their suspicions; they put him to the torture, and drew from him a relation of the massacre of their companions, and of the attack with which they were menaced.

Morales and Pizarro were at first appalled by the overwhelming danger which surrounded them. Concealing their agitation, however, they compelled Chirucà to send a message to each of the confederate caciques, inviting him to a secret conference, under pretence of giving him important information. The caciques came at the sum-

* Herrera, decad. ii. lib. i. cap. 4. Peter Martyr, decad. iii. cap. 10.

mons: they were thus taken one by one to the number of eighteen, and put in chains. Just at this juncture Peñalosa arrived with the thirty men who had remained with him at Tutibrà. Their arrival was hailed with joy by their comrades, who had given them up for lost. Encouraged by this unexpected reinforcement, the Spaniards now attacked by surprise the main body of confederate Indians, who, being ignorant of the discovery of their plot and capture of their caciques, were awaiting the return of the latter in a state of negligent security.

Pizarro led the van, and set upon the enemy at daybreak with the old Spanish war-cry of Santiago! It was a slaughter rather than a battle, for the Indians were unprepared for resistance. Before sunrise seven hundred lay dead upon the field. Returning from the massacre, the commanders doomed the caciques, who were in chains, to be torn in pieces by the bloodhounds; nor was even Chirucà spared from this sanguinary sentence. Notwithstanding this bloody revenge, the vindictive spirit of the commanders was still unappeased, and they set off to surprise the village of a cacique named Birù, who dwelt on the eastern side of the Gulf of St. Michael. He was famed for valour and for cruelty: his dwelling was surrounded by the weapons and other trophies of those whom he had vanquished; and he was said never to give quarter.

The Spaniards assailed his village before daybreak with fire and sword, and made dreadful havoc. Birù escaped from his burning habitation, rallied his people, kept up a galling fight throughout the greater part of that day, and handled the Spaniards so roughly, that, when he drew off at night, they did not venture to pursue him, but returned right gladly from his territory. According to some of the Spanish writers, the kingdom of Peru derived its name from this warlike cacique, through a blunder of the early discoverers; the assertion, however, is believed to be erroneous.

The Spaniards had pushed their bloody revenge to an extreme, and were now doomed to suffer from the recoil. In the fury of their passions, they had forgotten that they were but a handful of men surrounded by savage nations. Returning wearied and disheartened from the battle with Birù, they were waylaid and assaulted by a host of Indians led on by the son of Chirucà. A javelin from his hand pierced one of the Spaniards through the breast, and came out between the shoulders; several others were

wounded, and the remainder were harassed by a galling fire kept up from among rocks and bushes.

Dismayed at the implacable vengeance they had aroused, the Spaniards hastened to abandon these hostile shores and make the best of their way back to Darien. The Indians, however, were not to be appeased by the mere departure of the intruders. They followed them perseveringly for seven days, hanging on their skirts, and harassing them by continual alarms. Morales and Pizarro, seeing the obstinacy of their pursuit, endeavoured to gain a march upon them by stratagem. Making large fires as usual one night about the place of their encampment, they left them burning to deceive the enemy while they made a rapid retreat. Among their number was one poor fellow named Velasquez, who was so grievously wounded that he could not walk. Unable to accompany his countrymen in their flight, and dreading to fall into the merciless hands of the savages, he determined to hang himself, nor could the prayers and even tears of his comrades dissuade him from his purpose.

The stratagem of the Spaniards, however, was unavailing. Their retreat was perceived, and at daybreak, to their dismay, they found themselves surrounded by three squadrons of savages. Unable, in their haggard state, to make head against so many foes, they remained drawn up all day, on the defensive, some watching while others reposed. At night they lit their fires and again attempted to make a secret retreat. The Indians, however, were, as usual, on their traces, and wounded several with arrows. Thus pressed and goaded, the Spaniards became desperate, and fought like madmen, rushing upon the very darts of the enemy.

Morales now resorted to an inhuman and fruitless expedient to retard his pursuers. He caused several Indian prisoners to be slain, hoping that their friends would stop to lament over them; but the sight of their mangled bodies only increased the fury of the savages and the obstinacy of their pursuit.

For nine days were the Spaniards hunted in this manner about the woods and mountains, the swamps and fens, wandering they knew not whither, and returning upon their steps, until, to their dismay, they found themselves in the very place where, several days previously, they had been surrounded by the three squadrons.

Many now despaired of ever escaping with life from this trackless wilderness, thus teeming with deadly foes.

It was with difficulty their commanders could rally their spirits, and encourage them to persevere. Entering a thick forest, they were again assailed by a band of Indians, but despair and fury gave them strength: they fought like wild beasts rather than like men, and routed the foe with dreadful carnage. They had hoped to gain a breathing-time by this victory, but a new distress attended them. They got entangled in one of those deep and dismal marshes which abound on those coasts, and in which the wanderer is often drowned or suffocated. For a whole day they toiled through brake and bramble, and miry fen, with the water reaching to their girdles. At length they extricated themselves from the swamp, and arrived at the sea-shore. The tide was out, but was about to return, and on this coast it rises rapidly to a great height. Fearing to be overwhelmed by the rising surf, they hastened to climb a rock out of reach of the swelling waters. Here they threw themselves on the earth panting with fatigue and abandoned to despair. A savage wilderness, filled with still more savage foes, was on one side, on the other the roaring sea. How were they to extricate themselves from these surrounding perils? While reflecting on their desperate situation, they heard the voices of Indians. On looking cautiously round, they beheld four canoes entering a neighbouring creek. A party was immediately despatched, who came upon the savages by surprise, drove them into the woods, and seized upon the canoes. In these frail barks the Spaniards escaped from their perilous neighbourhood, and, traversing the Gulf of St. Michael, landed in a less hostile part, whence they set out a second time across the mountains.

It is needless to recount the other hardships they endured, and their further conflicts with the Indians; suffice it to say, after a series of almost incredible sufferings and disasters, they at length arrived in a battered and emaciated condition at Darien. Throughout all their toils and troubles, however, they had managed to preserve a part of the treasure gained in the islands; especially the pearls given them by the cacique of Isla Rica. These were objects of universal admiration. One of them was put up at auction, and bought by Pedrarias, and was afterwards presented by his wife Doña Isabella de Bobadilla to the empress, who, in return, gave her four thousand ducats.*

Such was the cupidity of the colonists, that the sight of these pearls and the reputed wealth of the islands of the

* Herrera, Hist. Ind., decad. ii. lib. i. cap. 4.

Southern Sea, and the kingdoms on its borders, made far greater impression on the public mind, than the tale told by the adventurers of the horrors they had passed; and every one was eager to seek these wealthy regions beyond the mountains.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Unfortunate Enterprises of the Officers of Pedrarias—Matrimonial Compact between the Governor and Vasco Nunez.

In narrating the preceding expedition of Morales and Pizarro, we have been tempted into what may almost be deemed an episode, though it serves to place in a proper light the lurking difficulties and dangers which beset the expeditions of Vasco Nuñez to the same regions, and his superior prudence and management in avoiding them. It is not the object of this narrative, however, to record the general events of the colony under the administration of Don Pedrarias Davila. We refrain, therefore, from detailing various expeditions set on foot by him to explore and subjugate the surrounding country; and which, being ignorantly or rashly conducted, too often ended in misfortune and disgrace. One of these was to the province of Zenu, where gold was supposed to be taken in the rivers in nets; and where the Bachelor Enciso once undertook to invade the sepulchres. A captain, named Francisco Becerra, penetrated into this country at the head of one hundred and eighty men, well armed and equipped, and provided with three pieces of artillery; but neither the commander nor any of his men returned. An Indian boy who accompanied them was the only one who escaped, and told the dismal tale of their having fallen victims to the assaults and stratagems and poisoned arrows of the Indians.

Another band was defeated by Tubanamà, the ferocious cacique of the mountains, who bore as his banners the bloody shirts of Spaniards slain in former battles. In fine, the colony became so weakened by these repeated losses, and the savages so emboldened by success, that the latter beleaguered it with their forces, harassed it by assaults and ambuscades, and reduced it to great extremity. Such was the alarm in Darien, says the Bishop Las Casas, that the people feared to be burnt in their houses. They kept a watchful eye upon the mountains, the plains, and the very branches of the trees. Their

imaginations were infected by their fears. If they looked towards the land, the long waving grass of the savannas appeared to them to be moving hosts of Indians. If they looked towards the sea, they fancied they beheld fleets of canoes in the distance. Pedrarias endeavoured to prevent all rumours from abroad that might increase this fevered state of alarm; at the same time he ordered the smelting-house to be closed, which was never done but in time of war. This was done at the suggestion of the bishop, who caused prayers to be put up, and fasts proclaimed, to avert the impending calamities.

While Pedrarias was harassed and perplexed by these complicated evils, he was haunted by continual apprehensions of the ultimate ascendancy of Vasco Nuñez. He knew him to be beloved by the people, and befriended by the bishop; and he had received proofs that his services were highly appreciated by the king. He knew also that representations had been sent home by him and his partisans, of the evils and abuses of the colony under the present rule, and of the necessity of a more active and efficient governor. He dreaded lest these representations should ultimately succeed; that he should be undermined in the royal favour, and Vasco Nuñez be elevated upon his ruins.

The politic bishop perceived the uneasy state of the governor's mind, and endeavoured, by means of his apprehensions, to effect that reconciliation which he had sought in vain to produce through more generous motives. He represented to him that his treatment of Vasco Nuñez was odious in the eyes of the people, and must eventually draw on him the displeausre of his sovereign. "But why persist," added he, "in driving a man to become your deadliest enemy, whom you may grapple to your side as your firmest friend? You have several daughters—give him one in marriage; you will then have for a son-in-law a man of merit and popularity, who is a hidalgo by birth, and a favourite of the king. You are advanced in life and infirm; he is in the prime and vigour of his days, and possessed of great activity. You can make him your lieutenant; and while you repose from your toils he can carry on the affairs of the colony with spirit and enterprise; and all his achievements will redound to the advancement of your family and the splendour of your administration."

The governor and his lady were won by the eloquence of the bishop, and readily listened to his suggestion; and

Vasco Nuñez was but too happy to effect a reconciliation on such flattering terms. Written articles were accordingly drawn up and exchanged, contracting a marriage between him and the eldest daughter of Pedrarias. The young lady was then in Spain, but was to be sent for, and the nuptials were to be celebrated on her arrival at Darien.

Having thus fulfilled his office of peace-maker, and settled, as he supposed, all feuds and jealousies on the sure and permanent foundation of family alliance, the worthy bishop departed shortly afterwards for Spain.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Vasco Nunez transports Ships across the Mountains to the Pacific Ocean.

[1516.]

Behold Vasco Nuñez once more in the high career of prosperity! His most implacable enemy had suddenly been converted into his dearest friend; for the governor, now that he looked upon him as his son-in-law, loaded him with favours. Above all, he authorized him to build brigantines and make all the necessary preparations for his long-desired expedition to explore the Southern Ocean. The place appointed for these purposes was the port of Careta, situated to the west of Darien; whence there was supposed to be the most convenient route across the mountains. A town called Acla had been founded at this port; and the fortress was already erected, of which Lope de Olano was alcalde; Vasco Nuñez was now empowered to continue the building of the town. Two hundred men were placed under his command, to aid him in carrying his plans into execution, and a sum of money was advanced to him out of the royal treasury. His supply of funds, however, was not sufficient; but he received assistance from a private source. There was a notary at Darien, Hernando de Arguello, a man of some consequence in the community, and who had been one of the most furious opponents of the unfortunate Nicuesa. He had amassed considerable property, and now embarked a great part of it in the proposed enterprise, on condition, no doubt, of sharing largely in its anticipated profits.

On arriving at Acla, Vasco Nuñez set to work to prepare the materials of four brigantines to be launched into the South Sea. The timber was felled on the Atlantic seaboard; and was then, with the anchors and rigging,

transported across the lofty ridge of mountains to the opposite shores of the Isthmus. Several Spaniards, thirty Negroes, and a great number of Indians were employed for the purpose. They had no other roads but Indian paths, straggling through almost impervious forests, across torrents, and up rugged defiles, broken by rocks and precipices. In this way they toiled like ants up the mountains, with their ponderous burdens, under the scorching rays of a tropical sun. Many of the poor Indians sank by the way, and perished under this stupendous task. The Spaniards and Negroes, being of hardier constitutions, were better able to cope with the incredible hardships to which they were subjected. On the summit of the mountains a house had been provided for their temporary repose. After remaining here a little time to refresh themselves and gain new strength, they renewed their labours, descending the opposite side of the mountains until they reached the navigable part of a river, which they called the Balsas, and which flowed into the Pacific.

Much time and trouble, and many lives were expended on this arduous undertaking, before they had transported to the river sufficient timber for two brigantines; while the timber for the other two, and the rigging and munitions for the whole, yet remained to be brought. To add to their difficulties, they had scarcely begun to work upon the timber before they discovered that it was totally useless, being subject to the ravages of the worms from having been cut in the vicinity of salt water. They were obliged, therefore, to begin anew, and fell trees on the border of the river.

Vasco Nuñez maintained his patience and perseverance, and displayed admirable management under these delays and difficulties. Their supply of food being scanty, he divided his people, Spaniards, Negroes, and Indians, into three bands; one was to cut and saw the wood, another to bring the rigging and iron-work from Acla, which was twenty-two leagues distant; and the third to forage the neighbouring country for provisions.

Scarcely was the timber felled and shaped for use when the rains set in, and the river swelled and overflowed its banks so suddenly, that the workmen barely escaped with their lives, by clambering into trees; while the wood on which they had been working was either buried in sand or slime, or swept away by the raging torrent. Famine was soon added to their other distresses. The foraging party did not return with food; and the swelling of the river cut

them off from that part of the country whence they obtained their supplies. They were reduced, therefore, to such scarcity, as to be fain to assuage their hunger with roots gathered in the forests.

In this extremity the Indians bethought themselves of one of their rude and simple expedients. Plunging into the river, they fastened a number of logs together with withes, and connected them with the opposite bank, so as to make a floating bridge. On this a party of the Spaniards crossed with great difficulty and peril, from the violence of the current, and the flexibility of the bridge, which often sank beneath them until the water rose above their girdles. On being safely landed, they foraged the neighbourhood, and procured a supply of provisions sufficient for the present emergency.

When the river subsided, the workmen again resumed their labours; a number of recruits arrived from Acla, bringing various supplies, and the business of the enterprise was pressed with redoubled ardour, until, after a series of incredible toils and hardships, Vasco Nuñez had the satisfaction to behold two of his brigantines floating on the river Balsas. As soon as they could be equipped for sea, he embarked in them with as many Spaniards as they could carry; and, issuing from the river, launched triumphantly on the great ocean he had discovered.

We can readily imagine the exultation of this intrepid adventurer, and how amply he was repaid for all his sufferings, when he first spread a sail on that untraversed ocean, and felt that the range of an unknown world was open to him.

There are points in the history of these Spanish discoveries of the western hemisphere, which make us pause with wonder and admiration at the daring spirit of the men who conducted them, and the appalling difficulties surmounted by their courage and perseverance. We know few instances, however, more striking than this piecemeal transportation across the mountains of Darien, of the first European ships that ploughed the waves of the Pacific; and we can readily excuse the boast of the old Castilian writers, when they exclaim, "that none but Spaniards could ever have conceived or persisted in such an undertaking; and no commander in the New World but Vasco Nuñez could have conducted it to a successful issue."*

* Herrera, decad. ii. lib. ii. cap. 11.

CHAPTER XXV.

Cruise of Vasco Nunez in the Southern Sea—Rumours from Acla.

The first cruise of Vasco Nuñez was to the group of Pearl Islands, on the principal one of which he disembarked the greater part of his crews, and despatched the brigantines to the main-land to bring off the remainder. It was his intention to construct the other two vessels of his proposed squadron at this island. During the absence of the brigantines, he ranged the island with his men, to collect provisions, and to establish a complete sway over the natives. On the return of his vessels, and while preparations were making for the building of the others, he embarked with a hundred men, and departed on a reconnoitering cruise to the eastward, towards the region pointed out by the Indians as abounding in riches.

Having passed about twenty leagues beyond the Gulf of San Miguel, the mariners were alarmed at beholding a great number of whales, which resembled a reef of rocks stretching far into the sea, and lashed by breakers. In an unknown ocean like this, every unusual object is apt to inspire alarm. The seamen feared to approach these fancied dangers in the dark; Vasco Nuñez anchored, therefore, for the night, under a point of land, intending to continue in the same direction on the following day. When the morning dawned, however, the wind had changed, and was contrary; whereupon he altered his course, and thus abandoned a cruise, which, if persevered in, might have terminated in the discovery of Peru! Steering for the main-land, he anchored on that part of the coast governed by the cacique Chuchamà, who had massacred Bernardo Morales and his companions, when reposing in his village. Here landing with his men, Vasco Nuñez came suddenly upon the dwelling of the cacique. The Indians sallied forth to defend their homes, but were routed with great loss; and ample vengeance was taken upon them for their outrage upon the laws of hospitality. Having thus avenged the death of his countrymen, Vasco Nuñez re-embarked and returned to Isla Rica.

He now applied himself diligently to complete the building of his brigantines, despatching men to Acla to bring the necessary stores and rigging across the mountains. While thus occupied, a rumour reached him that a new governor named Lope de Sosa was coming out from Spain to supersede Pedrarias. Vasco Nuñez was troubled

at these tidings. A new governor would be likely to adopt new measures, or to have new favourites. He feared, therefore, that some order might come to suspend or embarrass his expedition; or that the command of it might be given to another. In this perplexity he held a consultation with several of his confidential officers.

After some debate, it was agreed among them that a trusty and intelligent person should be sent as a scout to Acla, under pretence of procuring munitions for the ships. Should he find Pedrarias in quiet possession of the government, he was to account to him for the delay of the expedition; to request that the time allotted to it might be extended, and to request reinforcements and supplies. Should he find, however, a new governor actually arrived, he was to return immediately with the tidings. In such case it was resolved to put to sea before any contrary orders could arrive, trusting eventually to excuse themselves on the plea of zeal and good intentions.

CHAPTER XXVI.

Reconnoitering Expedition of Garabito—Stratagem of Pedrarias to entrap Vasco Nunez.

The person intrusted with the reconnoitering expedition to Acla was Andres Garabito, in whose fidelity and discretion Vasco Nuñez had implicit confidence. His confidence was destined to be fatally deceived. According to the assertions of contemporaries, this Garabito cherished a secret and vindictive enmity against his commander, arising from a simple but a natural cause. Vasco Nuñez had continued to have a fondness for the Indian damsel, daughter of the cacique Careta, whom he had received from her father as a pledge of amity. Some dispute arose concerning her on one occasion between him and Garabito, in the course of which he expressed himself in severe and galling language. Garabito was deeply mortified at some of his expressions, and, being of a malignant spirit, determined on a dastardly revenge. He wrote privately to Pedrarias, assuring him that Vasco Nuñez had no intention of solemnizing his marriage with his daughter, being completely under the influence of an Indian paramour; that he made use of the friendship of Pedrarias merely to further his own selfish views, intending, as soon as his ships were ready, to throw off all allegiance, and put to sea as an independent commander.

This mischievous letter Garabito had written immediately after the last departure of Vasco Nuñez from Acla. Its effect upon the proud and jealous spirit of the governor may easily be conceived. All his former suspicions were immediately revived. They acquired strength during a long interval that elapsed without tidings being received from the expedition. There were designing and prejudiced persons at hand, who perceived and quickened these jealous feelings of the governor. Among these was the Bachelor Corral, who cherished a deep grudge against Vasco Nuñez for having once thrown him into prison for his factious conduct; and Alonzo de la Puente, the royal treasurer, whom Vasco Nuñez had affronted by demanding the repayment of a loan. Such was the tempest gradually gathering in the factious little colony of Darien.

The subsequent conduct of Garabito gives much confirmation to the charge of perfidy advanced against him. When he arrived at Acla, he found that Pedrarias remained in possession of the government; for his intended successor had died in the very harbour. The conduct and conversation of Garabito was such as to arouse suspicions; he was arrested, and his papers and letters were sent to Pedrarias. When examined, he readily suffered himself to be wrought upon by threats of punishment and promises of pardon, and revealed all that he knew, and declared still more that he suspected and surmised, of the plans and intentions of Vasco Nuñez.

The arrest of Garabito, and the seizure of his letters, produced a great agitation at Darien. It was considered a revival of the ancient animosity between the governor and Vasco Nuñez, and the friends of the latter trembled for his safety.

Hernando de Arguello, especially, was in great alarm. He had embarked the most of his fortune in the expedition, and the failure of it would be ruinous to him. He wrote to Vasco Nuñez, informing him of the critical posture of affairs, and urging him to put to sea without delay. He would be protected, at all events, he said, by the Jeronimite Fathers at San Domingo, who were at that time all-powerful in the New World, and who regarded his expedition as calculated to promote the glory of God as well as the dominion of the king.* This letter

* In consequence of the eloquent representations made to the Spanish government by the venerable Las Casas, of the cruel wrongs and oppressions practised upon the Indians in the colonies, the Cardinal Ximenes, in 1516, sent out three Jeronimite Friars, chosen for their zeal and abilities, clothed with full powers to inquire into and remedy all abuses, and to take

fell into the hands of Pedrarias, and convinced him of the existence of a dangerous plot against his authority. He immediately ordered Arguello to be arrested; and now devised means to get Vasco Nuñez within his power. While the latter remained on the shores of the South Sea with his brigantines and his band of hearty and devoted followers, Pedrarias knew it would be vain to attempt to take him by force. Dissembling his suspicions and intentions, therefore, he wrote to him in amicable terms requesting him to repair immediately to Acla, as he wished to confer with him about the impending expedition. Fearing, however, that Vasco Nuñez might suspect his motives and refuse to comply, he at the same time ordered Francisco Pizarro to muster all the armed force he could collect, and seek and arrest his late patron and commander wherever he might be found.

So great was the terror inspired by the arrest of Arguello, and by the general violence of Pedrarias, that, though Vasco Nuñez was a favourite with the great mass of the people, no one ventured to warn him of the danger that attended his return to Acla.

CHAPTER XXVII.

Vasco Nunez and the Astrologer—His Return to Acla.

THE old Spanish writers who have treated of the fortunes of Vasco Nuñez, record an anecdote which is worthy of being cited, as characteristic of the people and the age. Among the motley crowd of adventurers lured across the ocean by the reputed wealth and wonders of the New World, was an Italian astrologer, a native of Venice, named Micer Codro. At the time that Vasco Nuñez held supreme sway at Darien, this reader of the stars had cast his horoscope, and pretended to foretell his destiny. Pointing one night to a certain star, he assured him that in the year in which he should behold that star in a part of the heavens which he designated, his life would be in imminent jeopardy, but should he survive this year of peril, he would become the richest and most renowned captain throughout the Indies.

Several years, it is added, had elapsed since this pre-

all proper measures for the good government, religious instruction, and effectual protection of the natives. The exercise of their powers at San Domingo made a great sensation in the New World, and, for a time, had a beneficial effect in checking the oppressive and licentious conduct of the colonists.

diction was made ; yet, that it still dwelt in the mind of Vasco Nuñez, was evident from the following circumstance. While waiting the return of his messenger, Garabito, he was on the shore of Isla Rica one serene evening, in company with some of his officers, when, regarding the heavens, he beheld the fated star exactly in that part of the firmament which had been pointed out by the Italian astrologer. Turning to his companions, with a smile, "Behold," said he, "the wisdom of those who believe in soothsayers, and, above all, in such an astrologer as Micer Codro! According to his prophecy, I should now be in imminent peril of my life; yet, here I am, within reach of all my wishes; sound in health, with four brigantines and three hundred men at my command, and on the point of exploring this great southern ocean."

At this fated juncture, say the chroniclers, arrived the hypocritical letter of Pedrarias, inviting him to an interview at Acla! The discreet reader will decide for himself what credit to give to this anecdote, or rather, what allowance to make for the little traits of coincidence gratuitously added to the original fact by writers who delight in the marvellous. The tenor of this letter awakened no suspicion in the breast of Vasco Nuñez, who reposed entire confidence in the amity of the governor as his intended father-in-law, and appears to have been unconscious of anything in his own conduct that could warrant hostility. Leaving his ships in command of Francisco Compañon, he departed immediately to meet the governor at Acla, unattended by any armed force.

The messengers who had brought the letter maintained at first a cautious silence as to the events which had transpired at Darien. They were gradually won, however, by the frank and genial manners of Vasco Nuñez, and grieved to see so gallant a soldier hurrying into the snare. Having crossed the mountains, and drawn near to Acla, their kind feelings got the better of their caution, and they revealed the true nature of their errand, and the hostile intentions of Pedrarias. Vasco Nuñez was struck with astonishment at the recital; but, being unconscious, it is said, of any evil intention, he could scarcely credit this sudden hostility in a man who had but recently promised him his daughter in marriage. He imagined the whole to be some groundless jealousy which his own appearance would dispel, and accordingly continued on his journey. He had not proceeded far, however, when he was met by a band of armed men, led by Francisco

Pizarro. The latter stepped forward to arrest his ancient commander. Vasco Nuñez paused for a moment, and regarded him with a look of reproachful astonishment. "How is this, Francisco?" exclaimed he. "Is this the way you have been accustomed to receive me?" Offering no further remonstrance, he suffered himself quietly to be taken prisoner by his former adherent, and conducted in chains to Acla. Here he was thrown into prison, and Bartolome Hurtado, once his favourite officer, was sent to take command of his squadron.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Trial of Vasco Nunez.

Don Pedrarias concealed his exultation at the success of the stratagem by which he had ensnared his generous and confiding rival. He even visited him in prison, and pretended deep concern at being obliged to treat him with this temporary rigour, attributing it entirely to certain accusations lodged against him by the treasurer, Alonzo de la Puente, which his official situation compelled him to notice and investigate.

"Be not afflicted, however, my son!" said the hypocrite, "an investigation will, doubtless, not merely establish your innocence, but serve to render your zeal and loyalty towards your sovereign still more conspicuous."

While Pedrarias assumed this soothing tone towards his prisoner, he urged the alcalde mayor, Espinosa, to proceed against him with the utmost rigour of the law.

The charge brought against him of a treasonable conspiracy to cast off all allegiance to the crown, and to assume an independent sway on the borders of the Southern Sea, was principally supported by the confessions of Andres Garabito. The evidence is also cited of a soldier, who stood sentinel one night near the quarters of Vasco Nuñez on Isla Rica, and who, being driven to take shelter from the rain under the eaves of his house, overheard a conversation between that commander and certain of his officers, wherein they agreed to put to sea with the squadron on their own account, and to set the governor at defiance. This testimony, according to Las Casas, arose from a misconstruction on the part of the sentinel, who only heard a portion of their conversation, relating to their intention of sailing without waiting for orders, in case a new governor should arrive to supersede Pedrarias.

The governor in the meantime informed himself from day to day and hour to hour, of the progress of the trial, and, considering the evidence sufficiently strong to warrant his personal hostility, he now paid another visit to his prisoner, and, throwing off all affectation of kindness, upbraided him in the most passionate manner.

"Hitherto," said he, "I have treated you as a son, because I thought you loyal to your king, and to me as his representative; but as I find you have meditated rebellion against the crown of Castile, I cast you off from my affection, and shall henceforth treat you as an enemy."

Vasco Nuñez indignantly repelled the charge, and appealed to the confiding frankness of his conduct as a proof of his innocence. "Had I been conscious of my guilt," said he, "what could have induced me to come here and put myself into your hands? Had I meditated rebellion, what prevented me from carrying it into effect? I had four ships ready to weigh anchor, three hundred brave men at my command, and an open sea before me. What had I to do but to spread sail and press forward? There was no doubt of finding a land, whether rich or poor, sufficient for me and mine, far beyond the reach of your control. In the innocence of my heart, however, I came here promptly, at your mere request, and my reward is slander, indignity, and chains!"

The noble and ingenuous appeal of Vasco Nuñez had no effect on the prejudiced feelings of the governor; on the contrary, he was but the more exasperated against his prisoner, and ordered that his irons should be doubled.

The trial was now urged by him with increased eagerness. Lest the present accusation should not be sufficient to effect the ruin of his victim, the old inquest into his conduct as governor, which had remained suspended for many years, was revived, and he was charged anew with the wrongs inflicted on the Bachelor Enciso, and with the death of the unfortunate Nicuesa.

Notwithstanding all these charges, the trial went on slowly, with frequent delays, for the alcalde mayor, Gaspar de Espinosa, seems to have had but little relish for the task assigned him, and to have needed frequent spurring from the eager and passionate governor. He probably considered the accused as technically guilty, though innocent of all intentional rebellion, but was ordered to decide according to the strict letter of the law. He therefore, at length, gave a reluctant verdict against Vasco Nuñez, but recommended him to mercy, on account of his great ser-

vices, or entreated that, at least he might be permitted to appeal. "No," said the unrelenting Pedrarias; "if he has merited death, let him suffer death!" He accordingly condemned him to be beheaded. The same sentence was passed upon several of his officers, who were implicated in his alleged conspiracy; among these was Hernando de Arguello, who had written the letter to Vasco Nuñez, informing him of the arrest of his messenger, and advising him to put to sea, without heeding the hostility of Pedrarias. As to the perfidious informer Garabito, he was pardoned and set at liberty.

In considering this case as far as we are enabled, from the imperfect testimony on record, we are inclined to think it one where passion and self-interest interfered with the pure administration of justice. Pedrarias had always considered Vasco Nuñez as a dangerous rival, and, though his jealousy had been for some time lulled by looking on him as an intended son-in-law, it was revived by the suggestion that he intended to evade his alliance and dispute his authority. His exasperated feelings hurried him too far to retreat, and, having loaded his prisoner with chains and indignities, his death became indispensable to his own security.

For our own part, we have little doubt that it was the fixed intention of Vasco Nuñez, after he had once succeeded in the arduous undertaking of transporting his ships across the mountains, to suffer no capricious order from Pedrarias, nor any other governor, to defeat the enterprise which he had so long meditated, and for which he had so laboriously prepared. It is probable he may have expressed such general determination in the hearing of Garabito and of others of his companions. We can find ample excuse for such a resolution in his consciousness of his own deserts; his experience of past hindrances to his expedition, arising from the jealousy of others; his feeling of some degree of authority, from his office of Adelantado; and his knowledge of the favourable disposition and kind intentions of his sovereign towards him. We acquit him entirely of the senseless idea of rebelling against the crown; and suggest these considerations in palliation of any meditated disobedience of Pedrarias, should such a charge be supposed to have been substantiated.

CHAPTER XXIX.

Execution of Vasco Nunez.

[1517.]

It was a day of gloom and horror at Acla, when Vasco Nuñez and his companions were led forth to execution. The populace were moved to tears at the unhappy fate of a man, whose gallant deeds had excited their admiration, and whose generous qualities had won their hearts. Most of them regarded him as the victim of a jealous tyrant; and even those who thought him guilty saw something brave and brilliant in the very crime imputed to him. Such, however, was the general dread inspired by the severe measures of Pedrarias, that no one dared lift up his voice, either in murmur or remonstrance.

The public crier walked before Vasco Nuñez, proclaiming: "This is the punishment inflicted by command of the king and his lieutenant, Don Pedrarias Davila, on this man, as a traitor and an usurper of the territories of the crown."

When Vasco Nuñez heard these words, he exclaimed, indignantly, "It is false! never did such a crime enter my mind. I have ever served my king with truth and loyalty, and sought to augment his dominions."

These words were of no avail in his extremity, but they were fully believed by the populace.

The execution took place in the public square of Acla; and we are assured by the historian Oviedo, who was in the colony at the time, that the cruel Pedrarias was a secret witness of the bloody spectacle; which he contemplated from between the reeds of the wall of a house, about twelve paces from the scaffold!*

Vasco Nuñez was the first to suffer death. Having confessed himself and partaken of the sacrament, he ascended the scaffold with a firm step and a calm and manly demeanour; and, laying his head upon the block, it was severed in an instant from his body. Three of his officers, Valderrabano, Botello, and Hernan Muños, were in like manner brought one by one to the block, and the day had nearly expired before the last of them was executed.

One victim still remained. It was Hernando de Arguello, who had been condemned as an accomplice, for having written the intercepted letter.

The populace could no longer restrain their feelings. They

* Oviedo, Hist. Ind., p. 2, cap. 9, MS.

had not dared to intercede for Vasco Nuñez, knowing the implacable enmity of Pedrarias; but they now sought the governor, and, throwing themselves at his feet, entreated that this man might be spared, as he had taken no active part in the alleged treason. The daylight, they said, was at an end, and it seemed as if God had hastened the night to prevent the execution.

The stern heart of Pedrarias was not to be touched. "No," said he, "I would sooner die myself than spare one of them." The unfortunate Arguello was led to the block. The brief tropical twilight was past, and in the gathering gloom of the night, the operations on the scaffold could not be distinguished. The multitude stood listening in breathless silence, until the stroke of the executioner told that all was accomplished. They then dispersed to their homes with hearts filled with grief and bitterness, and a night of lamentation succeeded to this day of horrors.

The vengeance of Pedrarias was not satisfied with the death of his victim; he confiscated his property and dishonoured his remains, causing his head to be placed upon a pole, and exposed for several days in the public square.*

Thus perished, in his forty-second year, in the prime and vigour of his days, and the full career of his glory, one of the most illustrious and deserving of Spanish discoverers; a victim to the basest and most perfidious envy.

How vain are our most confident hopes, our brightest triumphs! When Vasco Nuñez from the mountains of Darien beheld the Southern Ocean revealed to his gaze, he considered its unknown realms at his disposal. When he had launched his ships upon its waters, and his sails were in a manner flapping in the wind, to bear him in quest of the wealthy empire of Peru, he scoffed at the prediction of the astrologer, and defied the influence of the stars. Behold him interrupted at the very moment of his departure, betrayed into the hands of his most invidious foe, the very enterprise that was to have crowned him with glory wrested into a crime, and himself hurried to a bloody and ignominious grave at the foot, as it were, of the mountain whence he had made his discovery! His fate, like that of his renowned predecessor, Columbus, proves that it is sometimes dangerous even to deserve too greatly.

* Oviedo, ubi sup.

FORTUNES OF VALDIVIA AND HIS COMPANIONS.

It was in the year 1512, that Valdivia, the regidor of Darien, was sent to Hispaniola by Vasco Nuñez de Balboa for reinforcements and supplies for the colony. He set sail in a caravel, and pursued his voyage prosperously, until he arrived in sight of the island of Jamaica. Here he was encountered by one of the violent hurricanes which sweep those latitudes, and driven on the shoals and sunken rocks called the Vipers, since infamous for many a shipwreck. His vessel soon went to pieces, and Valdivia and his crew, consisting of twenty men, escaped with difficulty in the boat, without having time to secure a supply either of water or provisions. Having no sails, and their oars being scarcely fit for use, they were driven about for thirteen days, at the mercy of the currents of those unknown seas. During this time their sufferings from hunger and thirst were indescribable. Seven of their number perished, and the rest were nearly famished when they were stranded on the eastern coast of Yucatan, in a province called Maya. Here they were set upon by the natives, who broke their boat in pieces, and carried them off captive to the cacique of the province, by whose orders they were mewed up in a kind of pen.

At first their situation appeared tolerable enough, considering the horrors from which they had escaped. They were closely confined, it is true, but they had plenty to eat and drink, and soon began to recover flesh and vigour. In a little while, however, their enjoyment of this good cheer met with a sudden check, for the unfortunate Valdivia, and four of his companions, were singled out by the cacique, on account of their improved condition, to be offered up to his idols. The natives of this coast, in fact, were cannibals, devouring the flesh of their enemies, and of such strangers as fell into their hands. The wretched Valdivia and his fellow victims, therefore, were sacrificed in the bloody temple of the idol, and their limbs were afterwards served up at a grand feast held by the cacique and his subjects.

The horror of the survivors may be more readily imagined than described. Their hearts died within them when they heard the yells and howlings of the savages over their victims, and the still more horrible revelry of their cannibal

orgies. They turned with loathing from the food set so abundantly before them, at the idea that it was but intended to fatten them for a future banquet.

Recovering from the first stupor of alarm, their despair lent them additional force. They succeeded in breaking in the night from the kind of cage in which they were confined, and fled to the depths of the forest. Here they wandered about forlorn, exposed to all the dangers and miseries of the wilderness; famishing with hunger, yet dreading to approach the haunts of men. At length their sufferings drove them forth from the woods into another part of the country, where they were again taken captive. The cacique of this province, however, was an enemy to the one from whom they had escaped, and of less cruel propensities. He spared their lives, and contented himself with making them slaves, exacting from them the severest labour. They had to cut and draw wood, to procure water from a distance, and to carry enormous burdens. The cacique died soon after their capture, and was succeeded by another called Taxmar. He was a chief of some talent and sagacity, but he continued the same rigorous treatment of the captives. By degrees they sank beneath the hardships of their lot, until only two were left; one of them a sturdy sailor named Gonzalo Guerrero, the other a kind of clerical adventurer named Jeronimo de Aguilar. The sailor had the good luck to be transferred to the service of the cacique of the neighbouring province of Chatemal, by whom he was treated with kindness. Being a thorough son of the ocean, seasoned to all weathers, and ready for any chance or change, he soon accommodated himself to his new situation, followed the cacique to the wars, rose by his hardihood and prowess to be a distinguished warrior, and succeeded in gaining the heart and hand of an Indian princess.

The other survivor, Jeronimo de Aguilar, was of a different complexion. He was a native of Ecija, in Andalusia, and had been brought up to the church, and regularly ordained, and shortly afterwards had sailed in one of the expeditions to San Domingo, whence he had passed to Darien.

He proceeded in a different mode from that adopted by his comrade, the sailor, in his dealings with the Indians, and in one more suited to his opposite calling. Instead of playing the hero among the men, and the gallant among the women, he recollected his priestly obligations to humility and chastity. Accordingly, he made himself a

model of meekness and obedience to the cacique and his warriors, while he closed his eyes to the charms of the infidel women. Nay, in the latter respect, he reinforced his clerical vows by a solemn promise to God to resist all temptations of the flesh, so he might be delivered out of the hands of these Gentiles.

Such were the opposite measures of the sailor and the saint, and they appear to have been equally successful. Aguilar, by his meek obedience to every order, however arbitrary and capricious, gradually won the good will of the cacique and his family. Taxmar, however, subjected him to many trials before he admitted him to his entire confidence. One day when the Indians, painted and decorated in warlike style, were shooting at a mark, a warrior, who had for some time fixed his eyes on Aguilar, approached suddenly and seized him by the arm. "Thou seest," said he, "the certainty of these archers; if they aim at the eye, they hit the eye—if at the mouth, they hit the mouth; what wouldst thou think, if thou wert to be placed instead of the mark, and they were to shoot at and miss thee?"

Aguilar secretly trembled lest he should be the victim of some cruel caprice of the kind. Dissembling his fears, however, he replied with great submission, "I am your slave, and you may do with me as you please; but you are too wise to destroy a slave who is so useful and obedient." His answer pleased the cacique, who had secretly sent this warrior to try his humility.

Another trial of the worthy Jeronimo was less stern and fearful indeed, but equally perplexing. The cacique had remarked his unexampled discretion with respect to the sex, but doubted his sincerity. After laying many petty temptations in his way, which Jeronimo resisted with the self-denial of a saint, he at length determined to subject him to a fiery ordeal. He accordingly sent him on a fishing expedition accompanied by a buxom damsel of fourteen years of age: they were to pass the night by the sea-side, so as to be ready to fish at the first dawn of day, and were allowed but one hammock to sleep in. It was an embarrassing predicament—not apparently to the Indian beauty, but certainly to the scrupulous Jeronimo. He remembered, however, his double vow, and, suspending his hammock to two trees, resigned it to his companion; while, lighting a fire on the sea-shore, he stretched himself before it on the sand. It was, as he acknowledged, a night of fearful trial, for his sandy couch was cold and

cheerless, the hammock warm and tempting; and the infidel damsel had been instructed to assail him with all manner of blandishments and reproaches. His resolution, however, though often shaken, was never overcome; and the morning dawned upon him still faithful to his vow.

The fishing over, he returned to the residence of the cacique, where his companion, being closely questioned, made known the triumph of his self-denial before all the people. From that time forward he was held in great respect; the cacique especially treated him with unlimited confidence, intrusting to him the care, not merely of his house, but of his wives, during his occasional absence.

Aguilar now felt ambitious of rising to greater consequence among the savages, but this he knew was only to be done by deeds of arms. He had the example of the sturdy seaman, Gonzalo Guerrero, before his eyes, who had become a great captain in the province in which he resided. He entreated Taxmar, therefore, to intrust him with bow and arrows, buckler and war-club, and to enroll him among his warriors. The cacique complied. Aguilar soon made himself expert at his new weapons, signalized himself repeatedly in battle, and, from his superior knowledge of the arts of war, rendered Taxmar such essential service, as to excite the jealousy of some of the neighbouring caciques. One of them remonstrated with Taxmar for employing a warrior who was of a different religion, and insisted that Aguilar should be sacrificed to their gods. "No," replied Taxmar, "I will not make so base a return for such signal services: surely the gods of Aguilar must be good, since they aid him so effectually in maintaining a just cause."

The cacique was so incensed at this reply that he assembled his warriors and marched to make war upon Taxmar. Many of the counsellors of the latter urged him to give up the stranger who was the cause of this hostility. Taxmar, however, rejected their counsel with disdain, and prepared for battle. Aguilar assured him that his faith in the Christians' God would be rewarded with victory; he, in fact, concerted a plan of battle, which was adopted. Concealing himself, with a chosen band of warriors, among thickets and herbage, he suffered the enemy to pass by in making their attack. Taxmar and his host pretended to give way at the first onset. The foe rushed heedlessly in pursuit; whereupon Aguilar and his ambuscade assaulted them in the rear. Taxmar turned upon them in

front; they were thrown in confusion, routed with great slaughter, and many of their chiefs taken prisoners. This victory gave Taxmar the sway over the land, and strengthened Aguilar more than ever in his good graces.

Several years had elapsed in this manner, when intelligence was brought to the province of the arrival on the neighbouring coast of great vessels of wonderful construction, filled with white and bearded men, who fought with thunder and lightning. It was, in fact, the squadron of Francisco Hernandez de Cordova, then on a voyage of discovery. The tidings of this strange invasion spread consternation through the country, heightened, if we may credit the old Spanish writers, by a prophecy current among the savages of these parts, and uttered in former times by a priest named Chilam Cambal, who foretold that a white and bearded people would come from the region of the rising sun, who would overturn their idols and subjugate the land.

The heart of Jeronimo de Aguilar beat quick with hope when he heard of European ships at hand; he was distant from the coast, however, and perceived that he was too closely watched by the Indians to have any chance of escape. Dissembling his feelings, therefore, he affected to hear of the ships with perfect indifference, and to have no desire to join the strangers. The ships disappeared from the coast, and he remained disconsolate at heart, but was regarded with increased confidence by the natives.

His hopes were again revived in the course of a year or two by the arrival on the coast of other ships, which were those commanded by Juan de Grijalva, who coasted Yucatan in 1518; Aguilar, however, was again prevented by the jealous watchfulness of the Indians from attempting his escape, and when this squadron left the coast he considered all chance of deliverance at an end.

Seven years had gone by since his capture, and he had given up all hopes of being restored to his country and friends, when, in 1519, there arrived one day at the village three Indians, natives of the small island of Cozumel, which lies a few leagues in the sea, opposite the eastern coast of Yucatan. They brought tidings of another visit of white and bearded men to their shores, and one of them delivered a letter to Aguilar, which, being entirely naked, he had concealed in the long tresses of his hair, which were bound round his head.

Aguilar received the letter with wonder and delight, and read it in presence of the cacique and his warriors.

It proved to be from Hernando Cortez, who was at that time on his great expedition, which ended in the conquest of Mexico. He had been obliged by stress of weather to anchor at the island of Cozumel, where he learned from the natives that several white men were detained in captivity among the Indians on the neighbouring coast of Yucatan. Finding it impossible to approach the mainland with his ships, he prevailed upon three of the islanders, by means of gifts and promises, to venture upon an embassy among their cannibal neighbours, and to convey a letter to the captive white men. Two of the smallest caravels of the squadron were sent under the command of Diego de Ordas, who was ordered to land the three messengers at the point of Cotoche, and to wait there eight days for their return.

The letter brought by these envoys informed the Christian captives of the force and destination of the squadron of Cortez, and of his having sent the caravels to wait for them at the point of Cotoche, with a ransom for their deliverance, inviting them to hasten and join him at Cozumel.

The transport of Aguilar on first reading the letter, was moderated when he reflected on the obstacles that might prevent him from profiting by this chance of deliverance. He had made himself too useful to the cacique to hope that he would readily give him his liberty, and he knew the jealous and irritable nature of the savages too well not to fear that even an application for leave to depart might draw upon him the severest treatment. He endeavoured, therefore, to operate upon the cacique through his apprehensions. To this end he informed him that the piece of paper which he held in his hand brought him a full account of the mighty armament that had arrived on the coast. He described the number of the ships and various particulars concerning the squadron, all which were amply corroborated by the testimony of the messengers. The cacique and his warriors were astonished at this strange mode of conveying intelligence from a distance, and regarded the letter as something mysterious and supernatural. Aguilar went on to relate the tremendous and superhuman powers of the people in these ships, who, armed with thunder and lightning, wreaked destruction on all who displeased them, while they dispensed inestimable gifts and benefits on such as proved themselves their friends. He, at the same time, spread before the cacique various presents

brought by the messengers, as specimens of the blessings to be expected from the friendship of the strangers. The intimation was effectual. The cacique was filled with awe at the recital of the terrific powers of the white men, and his eyes were dazzled by the glittering trinkets displayed before him. He entreated Aguilar, therefore, to act as his ambassador and mediator, and to secure him the amity of the strangers.

Aguilar saw with transport the prospect of a speedy deliverance. In this moment of exultation, he bethought himself of the only surviving comrade of his past fortunes, Gonzalo Guerrero, and, sending the letter of Cortez to him, invited him to accompany him in his escape. The sturdy seaman was at this time a great chieftain in his province, and his Indian bride had borne him a numerous progeny. His heart, however, yearned after his native country, and he might have been tempted to leave his honours and dignities, his infidel wife and half savage offspring behind him, but an insuperable, though somewhat ludicrous, obstacle presented itself to his wishes. Having long since given over all expectation of a return to civilized life, he had conformed to the customs of the country, and had adopted the external signs and decorations that marked him as a warrior and a man of rank. His face and hands were indelibly painted or tattooed; his ears and lips were slit to admit huge Indian ornaments, and his nose was drawn down almost to his mouth by a massy ring of gold and a dangling jewel.

Thus curiously garbled and disfigured, the honest seaman felt, that, however he might be admired in Yucatan, he should be apt to have a hooting rabble at his heels in Spain. He made up his mind, therefore, to remain a great man among the savages, rather than run the risk of being shown as a man monster at home.

Finding that he declined accompanying him, Jeronimo de Aguilar set off for the point of Cotoche, escorted by three Indians. The time he had lost in waiting for Guerrero had nearly proved fatal to his hopes, for when he arrived at the point, the caravels sent by Cortez had departed, though several crosses of reeds set up in different places gave tokens of the recent presence of Christians.

The only hope that remained was, that the squadron of Cortez might yet linger at the opposite island of Cozumel; but how was he to get there? While wandering disconsolately along the shore, he found a canoe, half buried

in sand and water, and with one side in a state of decay; with the assistance of the Indians, he cleaned it, and set it afloat, and on looking further, found the stave of a hogshead which might serve for a paddle. It was a frail embarkation in which to cross an arm of the sea, several leagues wide, but there was no alternative. Prevailing on the Indians to accompany him, he launched forth in the canoe and coasted the main-land until he came to the narrowest part of the strait, where it was but four leagues across; here he stood directly for Cozumel, contending, as well as he was able, with a strong current, and at length succeeded in reaching the island.

He had scarce landed, when a party of Spaniards, who had been lying in wait, rushed forth from their concealment, sword in hand. The three Indians would have fled, but Aguilar reassured them, and calling out to the Spaniards in their own language, assured them that he was a Christian. Then, throwing himself on his knees, and raising his eyes streaming with tears to heaven, he gave thanks to God for having restored him to his countrymen.

The Spaniards gazed at him with astonishment: from his language he was evidently a Castilian, but to all appearance he was an Indian. He was perfectly naked; wore his hair braided round his head in the manner of the country, and his complexion was burnt by the sun to a tawny colour. He had a bow in his hand, a quiver at his shoulder, and a net-work pouch at his side, in which he carried his provisions.

The Spaniards proved to be a reconnoitering party, sent out by Cortez to watch the approach of the canoe, which had been descried coming from Yucatan. Cortez had given up all hopes of being joined by the captives, the caravel having awaited the allotted time at Cotoche, and returned without news of them. He had, in fact, made sail to prosecute his voyage, but fortunately one of his ships sprung a leak, which obliged him to return to the island.

When Jeronimo de Aguilar and his companions arrived in presence of Cortez, who was surrounded by his officers, they made a profound reverence, squatted on the ground, laid their bows and arrows beside them, and touching their right hands, wet with spittle on the ground, rubbed them about the region of the heart, such being their sign of the most devoted submission.

Cortez greeted Aguilar with a hearty welcome, and

raising him from the earth, took from his own person a large yellow mantle lined with crimson, and threw it over his shoulders. The latter, however, had for so long a time gone entirely naked, that even this scanty covering was at first almost insupportable, and he had become so accustomed to the diet of the natives, that he found it difficult to reconcile his stomach to the meat and drink set before him.

When he had sufficiently recovered from the agitation of his arrival among Christians, Cortez drew from him the particulars of his story, and found that he was related to one of his own friends, the licentiate Marcos de Aguilar. He treated him, therefore, with additional kindness and respect, and retained him about his person to aid him as an interpreter in his great Mexican expedition.

The happiness of Jeronimo de Aguilar at once more being restored to his countrymen, was doomed to suffer some alloy from the disasters that had happened in his family. Peter Martyr records a touching anecdote of the effect produced upon his mother by the tidings of his misfortune. A vague report reached her in Spain, that her son had fallen into the hands of cannibals. All the horrible tales concerning the treatment of these savages to their prisoners rushed to her imagination, and she went distracted. Whenever she beheld roasted meat, or flesh upon the spit, she would fill the house with her outcries. "Oh, wretched mother! oh, most miserable of women!" would she exclaim; "behold the limbs of my murdered son." *

It is to be hoped that the tidings of his deliverance had a favourable effect upon her intellects, and that she lived to rejoice at his after fortunes. He served Hernando Cortez with great courage and ability throughout his Mexican conquests, acting sometimes as a soldier, sometimes as interpreter and ambassador to the Indians, and in reward of his fidelity, and services, was appointed regidor, or civil governor of the city of Mexico.

MICER CODRO, THE ASTROLOGER.

The fate of the Italian astrologer, Micer Codro, who predicted the end of Vasco Nuñez, is related by the historian Oviedo, with some particulars that border upon

* P. Martyr, decad. iv. cap. 6.

the marvellous. It appears that, after the death of his patron, he continued for several years rambling about the New World, in the train of the Spanish discoverers; but intent upon studying the secrets of its natural history, rather than searching after its treasures.

In the course of his wanderings he was once coasting the shores of the Southern Ocean, in a ship commanded by one Geronimo de Valenzuela, from whom he received such cruel treatment as to cause his death, though, what the nature of the treatment was, we are not precisely informed.

Finding his end approaching, the unfortunate astrologer addressed Valenzuela in the most solemn manner: "Captain," said he, "you have caused my death by your cruelty; I now summon you to appear with me, within a year, before the Judgment Seat of God!"

The captain made a light and scoffing answer, and treated his summons with contempt.

They were then off the coast of Veragua, near the verdant islands of Zebaco, which lie at the entrance of the Gulf of Parita, or Paria. The poor astrologer gazed wistfully with his dying eyes upon the green and shady groves, and entreated the pilot or mate of the caravel to land him on one of the islands, that he might die in peace. "Micer Codro," replied the pilot, "those are not islands, but points of land: there are no islands hereabout."

"There are, indeed," replied the astrologer, "two good and pleasant islands, well watered, and near to the coast, and within them is a great bay with a harbour. Land me, I pray you, upon one of these islands, that I may have comfort in my dying hour."

The pilot, whose rough nature had been touched with pity for the condition of the unfortunate astrologer, listened to his prayer, and conveyed him to the shore, where he found the opinion he had given of the character of the coast to be correct. He laid him on the herbage in the shade, where the poor wanderer soon expired. The pilot then dug a grave at the foot of a tree, where he buried him with all possible decency, and carved a cross on the bark to mark the grave.

Some time afterwards, Oviedo, the historian, was on the island with this very pilot, who showed him the cross on the tree, and gave his honest testimony to the good character and worthy conduct of Micer Codro. Oviedo, as he regarded the nameless grave, passed the eulogium of a scholar upon the poor astrologer: "He died," says he,

"like Pliny, in the discharge of his duties, travelling about the world to explore the secrets of nature." According to his account, the prediction of Micer Codro held good with respect to Valenzuela, as it had in the case of Vasco Nuñez.—The captain died within the term in which he had summoned him to appear before the tribunal of God!*

JUAN PONCE DE LEON,

CONQUEROR OF PORTO RICO, AND DISCOVERER OF FLORIDA.

CHAPTER I.

Reconnoitering Expedition of Juan Ponce de Leon to the Island of Boriquen.

[1508.]

MANY years had elapsed since the discovery and colonization of Hayti, yet its neighbouring island of Boriquen, or as the Spaniards called it, St. Juan (since named Porto Rico), remained unexplored. It was beautiful to the eye as beheld from the sea, having lofty mountains clothed with forest trees of prodigious size and magnificent foliage. There were broad fertile valleys also, always fresh and green; for the frequent showers and abundant streams in these latitudes, and the absence of all wintry frosts, produce a perpetual verdure. Various ships had occasionally touched at the island, but their crews had never penetrated into the interior. It was evident, however, from the number of hamlets and scattered houses, and the smoke rising in all directions from among the trees, that it was well peopled. The inhabitants still continued to enjoy their life of indolence and freedom, unmolested by the ills that overwhelmed the neighbouring island of Hayti. The time had arrived, however, when they were to share the common lot of their fellow savages, and to sink beneath the yoke of the white man.

At the time when Nicholas de Ovando, governor of Hispaniola, undertook to lay waste the great province of Higuey, which lay at the eastern end of Hayti, he sent as commander of part of the troops a veteran soldier, named Juan Ponce de Leon. He was a native of Leon in Spain, and in his boyhood had been page to Pedro Nuñez de

* Vide Oviedo, Hist. Gen., lib. xxxix. cap. 2.

Guzman, Señor of Toral.* From an early age he had been schooled to war, and had served in various campaigns against the Moors of Granada. He accompanied Columbus in his second voyage in 1493, and was afterwards, it is said, one of the partisans of Francisco Roldan, in his rebellion against the admiral. Having distinguished himself in various battles with the Indians, and acquired a name for sagacity as well as valour, he received a command subordinate to Juan de Esquibel in the campaign against Higuey, and seconded his chief so valiantly in that sanguinary expedition, that, after the subjugation of the province, he was appointed to the command of it, as lieutenant of the governor of Hispaniola.

Juan Ponce de Leon had all the impatience of quiet life and the passion for exploit of a veteran campaigner. He had not been long in the tranquil command of his province of Higuey, before he began to cast a wistful eye towards the green mountains of Boriquen. They were directly opposite, and but twelve or fourteen leagues distant, so as to be distinctly seen in the transparent atmosphere of the tropics. The Indians of the two islands frequently visited each other, and in this way Juan Ponce received the usual intelligence, that the mountains he had eyed so wistfully abounded with gold. He readily obtained permission from Governor Ovando, to make an expedition to this island, and embarked in the year 1508 in a caravel, with a few Spaniards and several Indian interpreters and guides.

After an easy voyage, he landed on the woody shores of the island, near to the residence of the principal cacique, Agueybanà. He found the chieftain seated in patriarchal style, under the shade of his native groves, and surrounded by his family, consisting of his mother, step-father, brother, and sister, who vied with each other in paying homage to the strangers. Juan Ponce, in fact, was received into the bosom of the family, and the cacique exchanged names with him, which is the Indian pledge of perpetual amity. Juan Ponce also gave Christian names to the mother and step-father of the cacique, and would fain have baptized them, but they declined the ceremony, though they always took a pride in the names thus given them.

In the zeal to gratify his guests, the cacique took them to various parts of the island. They found the interior to correspond with the external appearance. It was wild and mountainous, but magnificently wooded, with deep rich

* Incas, Garcilaso de la Vega, Hist. Florida, tom. iv. cap. 37.

valleys fertilized by limpid streams. Juan Ponce requested the cacique to reveal to him the riches of the island. The simple Indian showed him his most productive fields of yuca, groves laden with delicious fruit, the sweetest and purest fountains, and the coolest runs of water.

Ponce de Leon heeded but little these real blessings, and demanded whether the island produced no gold. Upon this the cacique conducted him to two rivers, the Manatuabon and the Zebuco, where the very pebbles seemed richly veined with gold, and large grains shone among the sand through the limpid water. Some of the largest of these were gathered by the Indians and given to the Spaniards. The quantity thus procured confirmed the hopes of Juan Ponce; and leaving several of his companions in the house of the hospitable cacique, he returned to Hayti to report the success of his expedition. He presented the specimens of gold to the governor Ovando, who assayed them in a crucible. The ore was not so fine as that of Hispaniola, but, as it was supposed to exist in greater quantities, the governor determined on the subjugation of the island, and confided the enterprise to Juan Ponce de Leon.

CHAPTER II.

Juan Ponce aspires to the Government of Porto Rico.

[1509.]

The natives of Boriquen were more warlike than those of Hispaniola; being accustomed to the use of arms from the necessity of repelling the frequent invasions of the Caribs. It was supposed, therefore, that the conquest of their island would be attended with some difficulty, and Juan Ponce de Leon made another, and as it were a preparatory visit, to make himself acquainted with the country, and with the nature and resources of the inhabitants. He found the companions whom he had left there on his former visit, in good health and spirits, and full of gratitude towards the cacique Agueybanà, who had treated them with undiminished hospitality. There appeared to be no need of violence to win the island from such simple-hearted and confiding people. Juan Ponce flattered himself with the hopes of being appointed to its government by Ovando, and of bringing it peaceably into subjection. After remaining some time on the island, he returned to

San Domingo, to seek the desired appointment, but to his surprise, found the whole face of affairs had changed during his absence.

His patron, the governor Ovando, had been recalled to Spain, and Don Diego Columbus, son of the renowned discoverer, appointed in his place to the command of San Domingo. To add to the perplexities of Juan Ponce, a cavalier had already arrived from Spain, empowered by the king to form a settlement and build a fortress on the island of Porto Rico. His name was Christoval de Sotomayor; he was brother to the count of Camina, and had been secretary to Philip I., surnamed the Handsome, king of Castile and father of Charles V.

Don Diego Columbus was highly displeased with the act of the king in granting these powers to Sotomayor, as it had been done without his knowledge and consent, and of course in disregard of his prerogative, as viceroy, to be consulted as to all appointments made within his jurisdiction. He refused, therefore, to put Sotomayor in possession of the island. He paid as little respect to the claims of Juan Ponce de Leon, whom he regarded with an ungracious eye as a favourite of his predecessor Ovando. To settle the matter effectually, he exerted what he considered his official and hereditary privilege, and chose officers to suit himself, appointing one Juan Ceron to the government of Porto Rico, and Miguel Diaz to serve as his lieutenant.*

Juan Ponce de Leon and his rival candidate Christoval de Sotomayor, bore their disappointment with a good grace. Though the command was denied them, they still hoped to improve their fortunes in the island, and accordingly joined the crowd of adventurers that accompanied the newly-appointed governor.

New changes soon took place in consequence of the jealousies and misunderstandings between King Ferdinand and the admiral as to points of privilege. The former still seemed disposed to maintain the right of making appointments without consulting Don Diego, and exerted it in the present instance; for, when Ovando, on his return to Spain, made favourable representation of the merits of Juan Ponce de Leon, and set forth his services in exploring Porto Rico, the king appointed him governor of

* If the reader has perused the history of Columbus, he may remember the romantic adventure of this Miguel Diaz with a female cacique, which led to the discovery of the gold-mines of Hayna, and the founding of the city of San Domingo.

that island, and signified specifically that Don Diego Columbus should not presume to displace him.

CHAPTER III.

Juan Ponce rules with a Strong Hand—Exasperation of the Indians—Their Experiment to prove whether the Spaniards were mortal.

Juan Ponce de Leon assumed the command of the island of Boriquen in the year 1509. Being a fiery high-handed old soldier, his first step was to quarrel with Juan Ceron and Miguel Diaz, the ex-governor and his lieutenant, and to send them prisoners to Spain.*

He was far more favourable to his late competitor, Christoval de Sotomayor. Finding him to be a cavalier of noble blood and high connections, yet void of pretension, and of most accommodating temper, he offered to make him his lieutenant, and to give him the post of alcalde mayor, an offer which was very thankfully accepted.

The pride of rank, however, which follows a man even into the wilderness, soon interfered with the quiet of Sotomayor; he was ridiculed for descending so much below his birth and dignity, as to accept a subaltern situation to a simple gentleman in the island which he had originally aspired to govern. He could not withstand these sneers, but resigned his appointment, and remained in the island as a private individual; establishing himself in a village where he had a large repartimiento or allotment of Indians assigned to him by a grant from the king.

Juan Ponce fixed his seat of government in a town called Caparra, which he founded on the northern side of the island, about a league from the sea, in a neighbourhood supposed to abound in gold. It was in front of the port called Rico, which subsequently gave its name to the island. The road to the town was up a mountain, through a dense forest, and so rugged and miry that it was the bane of man and beast. It cost more to convey provisions and merchandise up this league of mountain, than it did to bring them from Spain.

Juan Ponce, being firmly seated in his government, began to carve and portion out the island, to found towns, and to distribute the natives into repartimientos, for the purpose of exacting their labour.

* Herrera, decad. i. lib. vii. cap. 13.

The poor Indians soon found the difference between the Spaniards as guests, and the Spaniards as masters. They were driven to despair by the heavy tasks imposed upon them; for to their free spirits and indolent habits, restraint and labour were worse than death. Many of the most hardy and daring proposed a general insurrection, and a massacre of their oppressors; the great mass, however, were deterred by the belief that the Spaniards were supernatural beings and could not be killed.

A shrewd and sceptical cacique, named Brayoan, determined to put their immortality to the test. Hearing that a young Spaniard, named Salzedo, was passing through his lands, he sent a party of his subjects to escort him, giving them secret instructions how they were to act. On coming to a river, they took Salzedo on their shoulders to carry him across, but, when in the midst of the stream, they let him fall, and, throwing themselves upon him, pressed him under water until he was drowned. Then dragging his body to the shore, and still doubting his being dead, they wept and howled over him, making a thousand apologies for having fallen upon him, and kept him so long beneath the surface.

The cacique Brayoan came to examine the body and pronounced it lifeless; but the Indians, still fearing it might possess lurking immortality, and ultimately revive, kept watch over it for three days, until it showed incontestable signs of putrefaction.

Being now convinced that the strangers were mortal men like themselves, they readily entered into a general conspiracy to destroy them.*

CHAPTER IV.

Conspiracy of the Caciques—Fate of Sotomayor.

The prime mover of the conspiracy among the natives was Agueybanà, brother and successor to the hospitable cacique of the same name, who had first welcomed the Spaniards to the island, and who had fortunately closed his eyes in peace, before his native groves were made the scenes of violence and oppression. The present cacique had fallen within the repartimiento of Don Christoval de Sotomayor, and, though treated by that cavalier with kindness, could never reconcile his proud spirit to the yoke of vassalage.

* Herrera, decad. i. lib. viii. cap. 13.

Agueybanà held secret councils with his confederate caciques, in which they concerted a plan of operations. As the Spaniards were scattered about in different places, it was agreed that, at a certain time, each cacique should despatch those within his province. In arranging the massacre of those within his own domains, Agueybanà assigned to one of his inferior caciques the task of surprising the village of Sotomayor, giving him 3,000 warriors for the purpose. He was to assail the village in the dead of the night, to set fire to the houses, and to slaughter all the inhabitants. He proudly, however, reserved to himself the honour of killing Don Christoval with his own hand.

Don Christoval had an unsuspected friend in the very midst of his enemies. Being a cavalier of gallant appearance and amiable and courteous manners, he had won the affections of an Indian princess, the sister of the cacique Agueybanà. She had overheard enough of the war-council of her brother and his warriors to learn that Sotomayor was in danger. The life of her lover was more precious in her eyes than the safety of her brother and her tribe; hastening, therefore, to him, she told him all that she knew or feared, and warned him to be upon his guard. Sotomayor appears to have been of the most easy and incautious nature, void of all evil and deceit himself, and slow to suspect anything of the kind in others. He considered the apprehension of the princess as dictated by her fond anxiety, and neglected to profit by her warning.

He received, however, about the same time, information from a different quarter, tending to the same point. A Spaniard, versed in the language and customs of the natives, had observed a number gathering together one evening, painted and decorated as if for battle. Suspecting some lurking mischief, he stripped and painted himself in their manner, and, favoured by the obscurity of the night, succeeded in mingling among them undiscovered. They were assembled round a fire performing one of their mystic war-dances, to the chant of an areyto or legendary ballad. The strophes and responses treated of revenge and slaughter, and repeatedly mentioned the death of Sotomayor.

The Spaniard withdrew unperceived, and hastened to apprize Don Christoval of his danger. The latter still made light of these repeated warnings; revolving them, however, in his mind in the stillness of the night, he began to feel some uneasiness, and determined to repair in

the morning to Juan Ponce de Leon, in his stronghold at Caparra. With his fated heedlessness, or temerity, however, he applied to Agueybanà for Indians to carry his baggage, and departed slightly armed, and accompanied by but three Spaniards, although he had to pass through close and lonely forests, where he would be at the mercy of any treacherous or lurking foe.

The cacique watched the departure of his intended victim, and set out shortly afterwards, dogging his steps at a distance through the forest, accompanied by a few chosen warriors. Agueybanà and his party had not proceeded far when they met a Spaniard named Juan Gonzalez, who spoke the Indian language. They immediately assailed him and wounded him in several places. He threw himself at the feet of the cacique, imploring his life in the most abject terms. The chief spared him for the moment, being eager to make sure of Don Christoval. He overtook that incautious cavalier in the very heart of the woodland, and stealing silently upon him, burst forth suddenly with his warriors from the covert of the thickets, giving the fatal war-whoop. Before Sotomayor could put himself upon his guard, a blow from the war-club of the cacique felled him to the earth, when he was quickly despatched by repeated blows. The four Spaniards who accompanied him shared his fate, being assailed, not merely by the warriors who had come in pursuit of them, but by their own Indian guides.

When Agueybanà had glutted his vengeance on this unfortunate cavalier, he returned in quest of Juan Gonzalez. The latter, however, had recovered sufficiently from his wounds to leave the place where he had been assailed, and, dreading the return of the savages, had climbed into a tree and concealed himself among the branches. From thence, with trembling anxiety, he watched his pursuers as they searched all the surrounding forest for him. Fortunately they did not think of looking up into the trees, but, after beating the bushes for some time, gave up the search. Though he saw them depart, he did not venture from his concealment until the night had closed; he then descended from the tree, and made the best of his way to the residence of certain Spaniards, where his wounds were dressed. When this was done, he waited not to take repose, but repaired by a circuitous route to Caparra, and informed Juan Ponce de Leon of the danger he supposed to be still impending over Sotomayor, for he knew not that the enemy had accom-

plished his death. Juan Ponce immediately sent out forty men to his relief. They came to the scene of massacre, where they found the body of the unfortunate cavalier, partly buried, but with the feet out of the earth.

In the meantime the savages had accomplished the destruction of the village of Sotomayor. They approached it unperceived, through the surrounding forest, and entering it in the dead of the night, set fire to the straw-thatched houses, and attacked the Spaniards as they endeavoured to escape from the flames.

Several were slain at the onset, but a brave Spaniard, named Diego de Salazar, rallied his countrymen, inspirited them to beat off the enemy, and succeeded in conducting the greater part of them, though sorely mangled and harassed, to the stronghold of the governor at Caparra. Scarcely had these fugitives gained the fortress, when others came hurrying in from all quarters, bringing similar tales of conflagration and massacre. For once a general insurrection, so often planned in savage life, against the domination of the white men, was crowned with success. All the villages founded by the Spaniards had been surprised, about a hundred of their inhabitants destroyed, and the survivors driven to take refuge in a beleaguered fortress.

CHAPTER V.

War of Juan Ponce with the Cacique Agueybana.

Juan Ponce de Leon might now almost be considered a governor without territories, and a general without soldiers. His villages were smoking ruins, and his whole force did not amount to a hundred men, several of whom were disabled by their wounds. He had an able and implacable foe in Agueybanà, who took the lead of all the other caciques, and even sent envoys to the Caribs of the neighbouring islands, entreating them to forget all ancient animosities, and to make common cause against these strangers—the deadly enemies of the whole Indian race. In the meantime the whole of this wild island was in rebellion, and the forests around the fortress of Caparra rang with the whoops and yells of the savages, the blasts of their war-conchs, and the stormy roaring of their drums.

Juan Ponce was a stanch and wary old soldier, and not easily daunted. He remained grimly ensconced within

his fortress, whence he despatched messengers in all haste to Hispaniola, imploring immediate assistance. In the meantime, he tasked his wits to divert the enemy and keep them at bay. He divided his little force into three bodies of about thirty men each, under the command of Diego Salazar, Miguel de Toro, and Luis de Anasco, and sent them out alternately to make surprises and assaults, to form ambuscades, and to practise the other stratagems of partisan warfare, which he had learnt in early life, in his campaigns against the Moors of Granada.

One of his most efficient warriors was a dog named Berezillo, renowned for courage, strength, and sagacity. It is said that he could distinguish those of the Indians who were allies from those who were enemies of the Spaniards. To the former he was docile and friendly, to the latter fierce and implacable. He was the terror of the natives, who were unaccustomed to powerful and ferocious animals, and did more service in this wild warfare than could have been rendered by several soldiers. His prowess was so highly appreciated that his master received for him the pay, allowance, and share of booty, assigned to a cross-bow man, which was the highest stipend given.*

At length the stout old cavalier Juan Ponce was reinforced in his stronghold by troops from Hispaniola, whereupon he sallied forth boldly to take revenge upon those who had thus held him in a kind of durance. His foe Agueybanà was at that time encamped in his own territories with more than five thousand warriors, but in a negligent unwatchful state, for he knew nothing of the reinforcements of the Spaniards, and supposed Juan Ponce shut up with his handful of men in Caparra. The old soldier, therefore, took him completely by surprise, and routed him with great slaughter. Indeed it is said the Indians were struck with a kind of panic when they saw the Spaniards as numerous as ever, notwithstanding the number they had massacred. Their belief in their immortality revived; they fancied that those whom they had slain had returned to life, and they despaired of victory over beings who could thus arise with renovated vigour from the grave. Various petty actions and skirmishes

* This famous dog was killed some years afterwards by a poisoned arrow, as he was swimming in the sea in pursuit of a Carib Indian. He left, however, a numerous progeny and a great name behind him; and his merits and exploits were long a favourite theme among the Spanish colonists. He was father to the renowned Leoncico, the faithful dog of Vasco Nunez, which resembled him in looks and equalled him in prowess.

afterwards took place, in which the Indians were defeated. Agueybanà, however, disdained this petty warfare, and stirred up his countrymen to assemble their forces, and by one grand assault to decide the fate of themselves and their island. Juan Ponce received secret tidings of their intent, and of the place where they were assembling. He had at that time barely eighty men at his disposal, but they were cased in steel and proof against the weapons of the savages. Without stopping to reflect, the high-mettled old cavalier put himself at their head, and led them through the forest in quest of the foe.

It was nearly sunset when he came in sight of the Indian camp, and the multitude of warriors assembled there made him pause, and almost repent of his temerity. He was as shrewd, however, as he was hardy and resolute. Ordering some of his men in the advance to skirmish with the enemy, he hastily threw up a slight fortification with the assistance of the rest. When it was finished, he withdrew his forces into it, and ordered them to keep merely on the defensive. The Indians made repeated attacks, but were as often repulsed with loss. Some of the Spaniards, impatient of this covert warfare, would sally forth in open field with pike and cross-bow, but were called back within the fortification by their wary commander.

The cacique Agueybanà was enraged at finding his host of warriors thus baffled and kept at bay by a mere handful of Spaniards. He beheld the night closing in, and feared that in the darkness the enemy would escape. Summoning his choicest warriors round him, therefore, he led the way in a general assault, when, as he approached the fortress, he received a mortal wound from an arquebuse, and fell dead upon the spot.

The Spaniards were not aware at first of the importance of the chief whom they had slain. They soon surmised it, however, from the confusion among the enemy, who bore off the body with great lamentations, and made no further attack.

The wary Juan Ponce took advantage of the evident distress of the foe to draw off his small forces in the night, happy to get out of the terrible jeopardy into which a rash confidence had betrayed him. Some of his fiery-spirited officers would have kept the field in spite of the overwhelming force of the enemy. "No, no," said the shrewd veteran; "it is better to protract the war than to risk all upon a single battle."

While Juan Ponce de Leon was fighting hard to maintain his sway over the island, his transient dignity was overturned by another power, against which the prowess of the old soldier was of no avail. King Ferdinand had repented of the step he had ill-advisedly taken in superseding the governor and lieutenant-governor appointed by Don Diego Columbus. He became convinced, though rather tardily, that it was an infringement of the rights of the admiral, and that policy, as well as justice, required him to retract it. When Juan Ceron and Miguel Diaz, therefore, came prisoners to Spain, he received them graciously, conferred many favours on them to atone for their rough ejectment from office, and finally, after some time, sent them back empowered to resume the command of the island. They were ordered, however, on no account to manifest rancour or ill-will against Juan Ponce de Leon, or to interfere with any property he might hold, either in houses, lands, or Indians; but, on the contrary, to cultivate the most friendly understanding with him. The king also wrote to the hardy veteran, explaining to him that this restitution of Ceron and Diaz had been determined upon in council, as a mere act of justice due to them, but was not intended as a censure upon his conduct, and that means should be sought to indemnify him for the loss of his command.

By the time that the governor and his lieutenant reached the island, Juan Ponce had completed its subjugation. The death of the island champion, the brave Agueybanà, had, in fact, been a deathblow to the natives, and shows how much, in savage warfare, depends upon a single chieftain. They never made head of war afterwards; but, dispersing among their forests and mountains, fell gradually under the power of the Spaniards. Their subsequent fate was like that of their neighbours of Hayti. They were employed in the labour of the mines, and in other rude toils so repugnant to their nature that they sank beneath them, and, in a little while, almost all the aboriginals disappeared from the island.

CHAPTER VI.

Juan Ponce de Leon hears of a wonderful Country and miraculous Fountain.

Juan Ponce de Leon resigned the command of Porto Rico with tolerable grace. The loss of one wild island and

wild government was of little moment, when there was a new world to be shared out, where a bold soldier like himself, with sword and buckler, might readily carve out new fortunes for himself. Besides, he had now amassed wealth to assist him in his plans, and, like many of the early discoverers, his brain was teeming with the most romantic enterprises. He had conceived the idea that there was yet a third world to be discovered, and he hoped to be the first to reach its shores, and thus secure a renown equal to that of Columbus.

While cogitating these things, and considering which way he should strike forth in the unexplored regions around him, he met with some old Indians, who gave him tidings of a country which promised, not merely to satisfy the cravings of his ambition, but to realize the fondest dreams of the poets. They assured him that, far to the north, there existed a land abounding in gold and in all manner of delights; but, above all, possessing a river of such wonderful virtue, that whoever bathed in it would be restored to youth! They added, that in times past, before the arrival of the Spaniards, a large party of the natives of Cuba had departed northward in search of this happy land and this river of life, and, having never returned, it was concluded that they were flourishing in renovated youth, detained by the pleasures of that enchanting country.

Here was the dream of the alchemist realized! one had but to find this gifted land, and revel in the enjoyment of boundless riches and perennial youth! nay, some of the ancient Indians declared that it was not necessary to go so far in quest of these rejuvenating waters, for that, in a certain island of the Bahama group, called Bimini, which lay far out in the ocean, there was a fountain possessing the same marvellous and inestimable qualities.

Juan Ponce de Leon listened to these tales with fond credulity. He was advancing in life, and the ordinary term of existence seemed insufficient for his mighty plans. Could he but plunge into this marvellous fountain or gifted river, and come out with his battered war-worn body restored to the strength and freshness and suppleness of youth, and his head still retaining the wisdom and knowledge of age, what enterprises might he not accomplish in the additional course of vigorous years insured to him!

It may seem incredible, at the present day, that a man of years and experience could yield any faith to a story

which resembles the wild fiction of an Arabian tale; but the wonders and novelties breaking upon the world in that age of discovery almost realized the illusions of fable, and the imaginations of the Spanish voyagers had become so heated, that they were capable of any stretch of credulity.

So fully persuaded was the worthy old cavalier of the existence of the region described to him, that he fitted out three ships at his own expense to prosecute the discovery, nor had he any difficulty in finding adventurers in abundance ready to cruise with him in quest of this fairy-land.*

CHAPTER VII.

Cruise of Juan Ponce de Leon in search of the Fountain of Youth.

[1512.]

It was on the 3rd of March, 1512, that Juan Ponce sailed with his three ships from the port of St. Germain, in the island of Porto Rico. He kept for some distance along the coast of Hispaniola, and then, stretching away to the northward, made for the Bahama Islands, and soon fell in with the first of the group. He was favoured with propitious weather and tranquil seas, and glided smoothly with wind and current along that verdant archipelago, visiting one island after another, until, on the fourteenth of the month, he arrived at Guanahani, or St. Salvador, where Christopher Columbus had first put his foot on the shores of the New World. His inquiries for the island of Bimini were all in vain, and, as to the fountain of youth, he may have drunk of every fountain, and river, and lake, in the archipelago, even to the salt pools of Turk's Island, without being a whit the younger.

Still he was not discouraged; but having repaired his

* It was not the credulous minds of voyagers and adventurers alone that were heated by these Indian traditions and romantic fables. Men of learning and eminence were likewise beguiled by them: witness the following extract from the second decad. of Peter Martyr, addressed to Leo X., then bishop of Rome:—

"Among the islands on the north side of Hispaniola there is one about 325 leagues distant, as they say which have searched the same, in the which is a continual spring of running water, of such marvellous virtue, that the water thereof being drunk, perhaps with some diet, maketh olde men young again. And here I must make protestation to your holiness not to think this to be said lightly or rashly, for they have so spread this rumour for a truth throughout all the court, that not only all the people, but also many of them whom wisdom or fortune hath divided from the common sort, think it to be true; but, if you will ask my opinion herein, I will answer, that I will not attribute so great power to nature, but that God hath no lesse reserved this prerogative to himself than to search the hearts of men," &c. —P. Martyr, decad. ii. cap. 10, Lok's translation.

ships, he again put to sea, and shaped his course to the north-west. On Sunday, the 27th of March, he came in sight of what he supposed to be an island, but was prevented from landing by adverse weather. He continued hovering about it for several days, buffeted by the elements, until, in the night of the 2nd of April, he succeeded in coming to anchor under the land, in thirty degrees eight minutes of latitude. The whole country was in the fresh bloom of spring; the trees were gay with blossoms, and the fields covered with flowers; from which circumstance, as well as from having discovered it on Palm Sunday (Pascua Florida), he gave it the name of Florida, which it retains to the present day. The Indian name of the country was Cautio.*

Juan Ponce landed, and took possession of the country in the name of the Castilian sovereigns. He afterwards continued for several weeks ranging the coasts of this flowery land, and struggling against the gulf-stream and the various currents which sweep it. He doubled Cape Cañaveral, and reconnoitred the southern and eastern shores, without suspecting that this was a part of Terra Firma. In all his attempts to explore the country, he met with resolute and implacable hostility on the part of the natives, who appeared to be a fierce and warlike race. He was disappointed also in his hopes of finding gold, nor did any of the rivers or fountains which he examined, possess the rejuvenating virtue. Convinced, therefore, that this was not the promised land of Indian tradition, he turned his prow homeward on the fourteenth of June, with the intention, in the way, of making one more attempt to find the island of Bimini.

In the outset of his return, he discovered a group of islets abounding with sea-fowl and marine animals. On one of them, his sailors, in the course of a single night, caught one hundred and seventy turtles, and might have taken many more, had they been so inclined. They likewise took fourteen sea-wolves, and killed a vast quantity of pelicans and other birds. To this group Juan Ponce gave the name of the Tortugas, or Turtles, which they still retain.

Proceeding in his cruise, he touched at another group of islets near the Lucayos, to whom he gave the name of La Vieja, or the Old Woman Group, because he found no inhabitant there but one old Indian woman.† This

* Herrera, Hist. Ind., decad. i. lib. ix. cap. 10.
† Idem, decad. i. lib. ix.

ancient sibyl he took on board his ship, to give him information about the labyrinth of islands into which he was entering, and perhaps he could not have had a more suitable guide in the eccentric quest he was making. Notwithstanding her pilotage, however, he was exceedingly baffled and perplexed in his return voyage among the Bahama Islands, for he was forcing his way, as it were, against the course of nature, and encountering the currents which sweep westward along these islands, and the trade-wind which accompanies them. For a long time he struggled with all kinds of difficulties and dangers; and was obliged to remain upwards of a month in one of the islands, to repair the damages which his ship had suffered in a storm.

Disheartened, at length, by the perils and trials with which nature seemed to have beset the approach to Bimini, as to some fairy island in romance, he gave up the quest in person, and sent in his place a trusty captain, Juan Perez de Ortubia, who departed in one of the other ships, guided by the experienced old woman of the isles, and by another Indian. As to Juan Ponce, he made the best of his way back to Porto Rico, where he arrived infinitely poorer in purse, and wrinkled in brow, by this cruise after inexhaustible riches and perpetual youth.

He had not been long in port when his trusty envoy, Juan Perez, likewise arrived. Guided by the sage old woman, he had succeeded in finding the long-sought-for Bimini. He described it as being large, verdant, and covered with beautiful groves. There were crystal springs and limpid streams in abundance, which kept the island in perpetual verdure, but none that could restore to an old man the vernal greenness of his youth.

Thus ended the romantic expedition of Juan Ponce de Leon. Like many other pursuits of a chimera, it terminated in the acquisition of a substantial good. Though he had failed in finding the fairy fountain of youth, he had discovered in place of it the important country of Florida.*

* The belief of the existence, in Florida, of a river like that sought by Juan Ponce, was long prevalent among the Indians of Cuba, and the caciques were anxious to discover it. That a party of the natives of Cuba once went in search of it, and remained there, appears to be a fact, as their descendants were afterwards to be traced among the people of Florida. Las Casas says, that, even in his days, many persisted in seeking this mystery, and some thought that the river was no other than that called the Jordan, at the point of St. Helena, without considering that the name was given to it by the Spaniards in the year 1520, when they discovered the land of Chicora.

CHAPTER VIII.

Expedition of Juan Ponce against the Caribs—His Death.

[1514.]

Juan Ponce de Leon now repaired to Spain, to make a report of his voyage to King Ferdinand. The hardy old cavalier experienced much raillery from the witlings of the court on account of his visionary voyage, though many wise men had been as credulous as himself at the outset. The king, however, received him with great favour, and conferred on him the title of Adelantado of Bimini and Florida, which last was as yet considered an island. Permission was also granted him to recruit men either in Spain or in the colonies for a settlement in Florida; but he deferred entering on his command for the present, being probably discouraged and impoverished by the losses in his last expedition, or finding a difficulty in enlisting adventurers. At length another enterprise presented itself. The Caribs had by this time become a terror to the Spanish inhabitants of many of the islands, making descents upon the coasts and carrying off captives, who, it was supposed, were doomed to be devoured by these cannibals. So frequent were their invasions of the island of Porto Rico, that it was feared they would ultimately oblige the Spaniards to abandon it.

King Ferdinand, therefore, in 1514, ordered that three ships, well armed and manned, should be fitted out in Seville, destined to scour the islands of the Caribs, and to free the seas from those cannibal marauders. The command of the Armada was given to Juan Ponce de Leon, from his knowledge in Indian warfare, and his varied and rough experience, which had mingled in him the soldier with the sailor. He was instructed in the first place to assail the Caribs of those islands most contiguous and dangerous to Porto Rico, and then to make war on those of the coast of Terra Firma, in the neighbourhood of Carthagena. He was afterwards to take the captaincy of Porto Rico, and to attend to the repartimientos or distributions of the Indians in conjunction with a person to be appointed by Diego Columbus.

The enterprise suited the soldier-like spirit of Juan Ponce de Leon, and the gallant old cavalier set sail full of confidence, in January, 1515, and steered direct for the Caribbees, with a determination to give a wholesome

castigation to the whole savage Archipelago. Arriving at the island of Guadaloupe, he cast anchor, and sent men on shore for wood and water, and women to wash the clothing of the crews, with a party of soldiers to mount guard.

Juan Ponce had not been as wary as usual, or he had to deal with savages unusually adroit in warfare. While the people were scattered carelessly on the shore, the Caribs rushed forth from an ambuscade, killed the greater part of the men, and carried off the women to the mountains.

This blow at the very onset of his vaunted expedition sank deep into the heart of Juan Ponce, and put an end to all his military excitement. Humbled and mortified, he set sail for the island of Porto Rico, where he relinquished all further prosecution of the enterprise, under pretext of ill health, and gave the command of the squadron to a captain named Zuñiga; but it is surmised that his malady was not so much of the flesh as of the spirit. He remained in Porto Rico as governor; but, having grown testy and irritable through vexations and disappointments, he gave great offence, and caused much contention on the island by positive and strong-handed measures, in respect to the distribution of the Indians.

He continued for several years in that island, in a state of growling repose, until the brilliant exploits of Hernando Cortez, which threatened to eclipse the achievements of all the veteran discoverers, roused his dormant spirit.

Jealous of being cast in the shade in his old days, he determined to sally forth on one more expedition. He had heard that Florida, which he had discovered, and which he had hitherto considered a mere island, was part of Terra Firma, possessing vast and unknown regions in its bosom. If so, a grand field of enterprise lay before him, wherein he might make discoveries and conquests to rival, if not surpass, the far-famed conquest of Mexico.

Accordingly, in the year 1521 he fitted out two ships at the island of Porto Rico, and embarked almost the whole of his property in the undertaking. His voyage was toilsome and tempestuous, but at length he arrived at the wished-for land. He made a descent upon the coast with a great part of his men, but the Indians sallied forth with unusual valour to defend their shores. A bloody battle ensued, several of the Spaniards were slain, and Juan Ponce was wounded by an arrow, in the thigh. He was borne on board his ship, and finding himself disabled for

further action, set sail for Cuba, where he arrived ill in body and dejected in heart.

He was of an age when there is no longer prompt and healthful reaction, either mental or corporeal. The irritations of humiliated pride, and disappointed hope, exasperated the fever of his wound, and he died soon after his arrival at the island. "Thus fate," says one of the quaint old Spanish writers, "delights to reverse the schemes of man. The discovery that Juan Ponce flattered himself was to lead to a means of perpetuating his life, had the ultimate effect of hastening his death."

It may be said, however, that he has at least attained the shadow of his desire, since, though disappointed in extending the natural term of his existence, his discovery has insured a lasting duration to his name.

The following epitaph was inscribed upon his tomb, which does justice to the warrior qualities of the stout old cavalier :—

Mole sub hac fortis requiescunt ossa Leonis,
Qui vicit factis nomina magna suis.

It has thus been paraphrased in Spanish by the licentiate Juan de Castellanos :—

Aqueste lugar estrecho
Es sepulchro del varon,
Que en el nombre fue Leon,
Y mucho mas en el hecho.

"In this sepulchre rest the bones of a man, who was a lion by name, and still more by nature."

THE END.

KING ALFRED'S COLLEGE
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